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FROM THE WRITINGS OF

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Short Passages.

1

No book can be written in behalf of the Bible like the Bible itself.

2

The Bible is God's Word, and through it God the Holy Ghost, who spake it, speaks to the soul which closes not itself against it.

3

Alas that, while men are laying down the laws upon which it beseems their Maker to act, they forget that He *is* their Maker, that these brave words of theirs are but like the speeches in the mouth of a player, that the great reality, now veiled, is at hand, and that then God, who bears so long with our presumptions, will show indeed, as He has said, 'whose work shall stand, Mine or theirs.'

4

The Seraphim are spoken of in Isaiah as engaged in ceaseless praise in great nearness to God, yet as concerned also about us below, for part of their song was, 'The earth is full of His glory.'

5

One deadly sin, wilfully and knowingly indulged, absolutely separates us from God.

6

Some crosses, from our very childhood, God has in His goodness provided for us, that in them we may learn what of ourselves we should have had no courage to begin. We speak of the 'crosses' of daily life, and forget that our very language is a witness against us; how meekly we ought to bear them in the blessed steps of our holy Lord; how in 'every cross and care' we ought, not to acquiesce simply, but to take them cheerfully, not cheerfully only, but joyfully; yea, if they should even deserve the name of tribulation, to 'joy in tribulation' also, as seeing in them our Father's hand, our Saviour's Cross. *These*, meet us most often in our earliest years, since then we are most subject to the wills of others; and to those who are yet young, every contradiction of their will, whether from elders or from the rudenesses of those of their own age, every little

ailment, every petty disappointment, will, if they take it cheerfully, become a blessing; it is a touch of their Saviour's Cross, and so, though painful at the moment, is sweet and healthful afterwards. So walking on earth we may be in Heaven.

7

God so loveth the free choice and love of His creatures, that He draggeth us not as stones, but draws us with cords of loving-kindness.

8

Christ is probably more often to be found in the hovels of the poor, than in the drawing-rooms of the rich.

9

Any self-denial, however simple, done for love of your Redeemer, is accepted by Him as a bearing of His Cross.

10

Self-indulgence is a hard master, not Jesus. Vice wears the body, self-denial braces it. Sin is an exacting tyrant, the service of God is perfect freedom.

11

Think often of that place round the eterna Throne, which He by His blood has prepared individually for

you. Jesus will impart to your petty cross some of the virtue of His Saving Cross. He will make any hardness sweet to you, who is Himself all sweetness and every pleasureable delight. He will give you His own, and

> 'The heart that loveth knoweth well
> What Jesus 'tis to love.'

12

One unrenounced evil habit keeps the soul Satan's prisoner, that he cannot follow Christ.

13

Be not curious about others, but in God's long-suffering save thou thyself. Look up to Him, the Good Shepherd, who laid down His life for the sheep, and pray Him with His pierced hands to loose the thorns which hold thee, and to lay thee upon His shoulders. Yea, He will carry thee in His bosom.

14

It so belongs to a Christian to long for His coming, that those who love Him have often expected it, and yet the tokens vanished.

15

The certain serene convictions of faith make the unbelievers uneasy as being of heavenly birth; and

God the Holy Ghost is ever brooding over this chaos of unbelief, as over the primeval darkness; the ocean of God's love is ever winding, this way and that, over the hard rocks, if so be it may find entrance in Christ, Whom they know not is ever invisibly interceding for them. Only, as said the dying Joshua, 'be very courageous to keep and to do all' that is commanded you.

16

In all evil-speaking, the listener is the accomplice of the evil-speaker. Men would not speak evil unless they knew it to be acceptable to those to whom they spoke.

17

Meekness is a grace formed by suffering; as, in the language moulded by the Spirit of God, afflicted, suffering, meek, humble, are scarcely distinguishable.

18

Hunger and thirst after righteousness are the burning disquiet of the soul, through the body of death in which it is imprisoned, and for its unlikeness to its God.

19

Poverty of spirit cannot be obtained but by much mental privation, cutting off occasions of self-display,

curbing its own spirit, checking all self-elation, whether from within, or from worldly prosperity, or popular favour, immersing itself evermore in the abyss of its own nothingness, and knowing itself to be nothing (not saying it only), and God to be all.

20

Mercifulness, by its very name, implies a fellow-suffering.

21

True charity is to warn of the existence of a precipice; it were unloving to men's souls to leave them playing close to it, but unwarned.

22

In the soul, at the last moment of its passage on the threshold of eternity, there occur doubtless Divine mysteries of justice, but above all of mercy and of love; 'Mercy triumpheth over justice.' We abstain from sounding indiscreetly the Divine counsels, but we know indubitably, that on each occasion they are worthy of God and of His infinite goodness as well as of His justice.

23

If it is the privilege of purity of heart to behold God for ever, how can they see Him in this vestibule and

preparation for that eternal and beatific vision, who subject what is highest to what is lowest,—the soul, which is most akin to God, to the passions of the flesh, which man has in common with the brute?

24

Truth is a sacred thing, because it is a reflection of God; whoso seeks it not for its own sake, will never find it.

25

We are Christians, and as such have to pray most especially for bad Christians. How can we think that we love God if we are not anxious that others should love Him?

26

Be with God in thy outward works, refer them to Him, offer them to Him, seek to do them in Him and for Him, and He will be with thee in them, and they shall not hinder, but rather invite, His presence in thy soul. Seek to see Him in all things, and in all things He will come nigh to thee.

27

God so loveth us that He would make all things channels to us and messengers of His love. Do for His sake deeds of love, and He will give thee His love.

Still thyself, thy own cares, thy own thoughts, for Him, and He will give thee Himself. Ask for Himself, and He will take thee into Himself. Truly a secret, hidden thing is the love of God, known only to them who seek it, and to them also a secret, for what man can have of it here is, how slight a foretaste of that endless ocean of His love!

28

Save thou thyself. By praying in our Redeemer's name thou mayst be saved, not by questioning; yea, and thou mayst help to save others, by praying for them, not by asking how they can be saved.

29

Pray modestly as to things of this life; earnestly for what may be helps to your salvation; intensely for salvation itself, that you may ever behold God, love God. Practise in life whatever you pray for, and God will give it you more abundantly.

30

Think nothing too little; seek for the Cross in the daily incidents of life; look for the Cross in everything. Nothing is too little which relates to man's salvation, nor is there anything too little in which either to please God or to serve Satan.

31

The needs which God lays upon us hurt no man's leisure, as leisure given to God hurts no man's work: it is our own self-chosen employments, the cares wherewith we cumber ourselves, which hinder prayer.

32

Since the rejection of truth, as well as unholiness of life, will have to do with the final doom of man, then, not to state the truth as explicitly as we can, to allow truth and falsehood to be jumbled together in one ever-shifting kaleidoscope of opinion to allow that all may have an equal chance of being right, and so (since they are contradictories) that all have an equal chance of being false, is treason to the God of Truth, and cruelty to the souls of men.

33

No one who believes in Christ can, or ought, to assume that to be doubtful upon which Christ has set His seal. So it is as to the whole substance of the faith, and each detail of it. Our own knowledge is certain, and we shall never win others to our own certainty of faith and knowledge by assuming the character of persons who have themselves to arrive at faith.

34

The battle for the truth must be fought. It is half won when any one has firmly fixed in his mind the first principle, that God is All-Wise and All-Good, and that man's own wisdom, although from God, is no measure for the wisdom of God, and cannot sound its depth.

35

It is amid many inconsistencies that we learn to be consistent.

36

As thou wouldst not leave thy worldly affairs unexamined, lest they go to ruin, be as faithful with thy soul.

37

Be not taken up with an earthly future, if thou wouldst look beyond the veil, and 'behold Him who is invisible.'

38

Little of the praise of men doth God often assign to the chiefest of His servants in this life, reserving the rest to be proclaimed before angels and men at the Great Day.

39

Distraction will come through weakness, ill-health, fatigue; only pray, guard, strive against it; humble

yourselves under it, and for the past negligences, of which it is mostly the sad fruit.

40

Come we, then, calmly to God's holy House, not thinking or speaking up to its very threshold of things on earth, but as men bent on a great service where much is at stake; coming to a holy Presence, from Whom depends our all. Pray, as we enter it, that God would guard our thoughts, and compose our minds, and fix them on Him.

41

'New every morning is the love,
Our wakening and uprising prove;
Through sleep and darkness safely brought,
Restored to life and power and thought.'—*Keble.*

We wake morning by morning to a new life. The cares and thoughts of yesterday have been buried in our sleep; the world around us is still hushed; the turmoil of life has not yet come back to haunt us. We should deal reverently, then, with our first thoughts, beware how we awaken in ourselves any of the trains of plans, or business, or occupations, which take up our day. They are yet at a distance from us, and we have more power over them. Stop their first inroad, turn from them reverently to God before one thought have awakened its fellow; that so thou mayst secure

undisturbed thy first prayers, wherein thou committest thy whole self, soul, body, and spirit, for the day to God. Our minds are holy things ; they are the temples of God, and so, for His honour's sake who has so hallowed them, we should be on our guard what we allow to enter there.

42

Absence of chastisement or trial, the fulness of the world's prosperity, are the worst outward tokens of man's salvation. Blow upon blow, and wound upon wound, are signs of His mercy.

43

All pain, sickness, weariness, distress, languor, agony of mind or body, whether in ourselves or others, is to be treated reverently, seeing in it our Maker's hand passing over us, fashioning, by suffering, the imperfect or decayed substance of our souls. Every sorrow is a billow on this world's troublesome sea, which we must pass over on the Cross, to bear us nearer to our home. Each trouble is meant to relax the world's hold over us, and our hold upon the world ; each loss to make us seek our gain in heaven.

44

'Abide with me ; fast falls the eventide ;
The darkness deepens ; Lord, with me abide.'

Christ our Lord made as though He would leave His disciples, and go further ; though, in truth, His desire

was to stay with them. But He willed to kindle in them the burning desire for His presence, which is so precious in His sight, and to which He is so ready to give all things, even whatsoever we ask.

45

Meditate daily on the things of eternity, and by the grace of God do something daily which thou wouldst wish to have done when the Day of Judgment comes. Eternity fades quickly from sight, amid the mists and clouds of this world. Heaven is above our heads, yet we see it not with eyes fixed on the earth.

46

A believer who acts not on his belief is a living lie. The world, too, owns this, when it urges the inconsistencies of a professed believer as an argument against belief. Their outward acts belie their inward convictions. If the acts correspond not to the faith, the faith will sink down to the acts.

47

Our Lord teaches us as to those very little things, in order that we may know and feel that nothing is too little in which to see His Hand, nothing which touches our souls too little to accept from Him, nothing too little to be done for Him. Since the hairs of our head are all numbered, so is every throb or shoot of pain,

every beating or aching of the heart. Every tear which starts is seen, and, if wept to Him, is gathered up by Him. Every secret sigh He hears at once in His whole creation. Every secret wish and prayer He hears while yet unuttered or unformed.

48

As Christians our lot is to be in the world, yet we are not to be of it. We are surrounded by the world, yet in Baptism we renounced it. We are in it as strangers and pilgrims, yet we have much to do with it. Our duties lie in it, we have to deal with it, bear our part in it, use and not abuse it, conquer it. It is our enemy, yet it is to be our servant; the scene of our temptation, yet the witness of our victory. It passes away, yet it is our birthplace for eternity. It draws down to hell, yet our way of using it is to prepare us for heaven.

49

One by one, God makes us members of Himself. He took us out of our state by nature, and made us integral parts of His mystical Body. One by one, He more than repaired to us Adam's loss; one by one, we were clothed with Christ as with a robe. He gives Himself to us, one by one, to take unseen into our hands, before we lay Him up in our breasts. Our senses report nothing to us, any more than they do the presence of God, in whom we live, and move, and have our being.

We walk about in Almighty God, in the ocean of Almighty love, and yet we discern Him not. It needs but an act of faith that we are in the ocean of God's Being, and we seem to be immersed in it.

50

All of this world will soon have passed away, but God will remain, and thou, whatever thou hast become, good or bad. Thy deeds are now the seed-corn of eternity. Each single act in each several day, good or bad, is a portion of that seed. Each day adds some line, making thee more or less like Him, more or less capable of His love, fitter for greater or less glory, to be nearer Him, or to be less near, or to be away from Him for ever.

51

If we will be busied and careful about many things, we cannot do the one thing needful—sit at Jesus' feet, and hear His words.

52

Patience is the endurance of any evil out of the love of God as the will of God. The offices of patience are as varied as the ills of life. We have need of it with ourselves, and with others, with those above and below us, and with equals; with those who love us, and those who love us not, for the greatest things and the least;

against sudden trouble, and under daily burdens, disappointment as to weather, or the breaking of the heart, in weariness of body, in wearing of the soul, in our own failure and others' failure to us. In all these things, from childhood's little troubles to the martyrs' sufferings, patience is the grace of God, whereby we endure evil, for the love of Him, and keep still and motionless not to offend Him.

53

God helps us in our prayers, but He does so in proportion as we admit His aid in the rest of our life. We cannot pray as we might, unless we live as we ought. Our prayers will partake of our other infirmities. We cannot at once collect ourselves, and become other men in the presence of God from what we were just before.

54

Public prayer may be measured; its hours can be counted; *private* prayer is immeasurable, for it may be at all times, when in company, as well as when alone, amid conversation, as when silent, in the midst of business and employment, as when unoccupied.

55

Be not held back by any thought of unworthiness, or by failures, from the childlike love of God; when we were dead in trespasses and sins, Christ died for

us; when we were afar off, Christ recalled us; when lost, Christ sought us; how much more may we reverently love Him, and hope that we are loved by Him, when He has found us, and we, amid whatever frailties, would 'love Him by whom we have been loved.'

56

Each sinner adds to fill up the measure of a nation's sins; each penitent draws down the loving-kindness of God, that 'He spare His people, and give not His heritage to reproach.'

57

Love which is of God must burn up in us the love of self and of perishing things; it must consume the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, the pride of life; for love and lust cannot dwell together. But, instead of ashes, God through it will give us bread; for short-lived fevers of indulgence, rest and peace in Him; for this world's pageant, the beauty of the soul through grace; for vanities, Himself, the light, and joy, and sweetness, and bliss, and hope, and rich possession of the soul.

58

Were it indeed a blessing to men's souls, could they be careless of the souls of others?

59

Luxury is the parent of covetousness ; and covetousness of unjust gain, and of the grinding of the poor.

60

Every visitation of God speaks its own message to the soul. 'Thy sin,' He says, 'shall find thee out.' Sorrow and suffering bring to remembrance the sin to which prosperity tempted, and which it forgot.

61

God's judgments have ever a twofold aspect, of terror and of love, the cloud and the bow in it; yet the darkness is often so heavy that the portion of the bow which we see, though very bright, is very small. The thunder and lightning and rain are upon us; the hope is for the time to come.

62

Every judgment of God, until men, by final impenitence, exhaust it to themselves, and prove themselves unworthy of it, and incapable of amendment, is mercy. As individuals we feel that it is so.

63

A firm faith knows that whatever befalls it from without, will, if by God's grace it perseveres, turn to its

everlasting good. To this faith the stepping-stone is humility. Faith tells us that all that befalls us is the will of God. A humble faith knows that if it is good, it is of God's goodness, not our desert; if evil, it is less than we deserve.

64

There was no evil in Paradise. Death, pain, sickness of body and soul, came to us by sin. We are sinners, sick in soul, more or less, whether we know our sickness or not. It is the worst sickness not to know that we are sick.

65

The years of the oldest, nay, of Methuselah, when past, are but a point, but the twinkling of an eye, except for what they bear in them, good or bad. The question is, not what we have in store, but what is our to-day. It is not the physical, but the moral aspect of to-day, upon which our eternity hangs; it is not the question, how *long* we shall live, but *how* we live. Your past has been the parent of the present; your present will be the parent of the future. As you lived when younger, such, unless there has come some turning to God, or some turning away from Him, is your life now. Age matures the fruit of youth, it does not change its nature. The apples of Sodom, fresh, blooming, rich in colour, have enlarged to their gigantic size, but have therewith become dust at the core. The sapling which a boy's

weakness could bend at will, cannot, some years later, be riven by a giant's strength. So is it in things of nature, the pictures of ourselves.

66

St. Luke is noted for his instinct for souls. His Gospel has been named the Gospel of Mercy, because it is so full of incidents of our Lord's love of sinners. His is a Gospel of sunshine; without him we should have known little of the holy Childhood; and to him, the first artist of the Church, we fitly owe the three songs of the Gospel, the *Magnificat*, the *Benedictus*, and the *Nunc Dimittis*. He was the Evangelist of the sacred Infancy, as St. John of the Lord's Divinity, St. Matthew and St. Mark of the active life of our blessed Lord.

67

'He was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost.' What words are these! We have often heard them, and so our ears become dull to them. Yet so does Scripture entitle only one human being besides, and him that one who was chosen to that high dignity of being first in the noble army of martyrs. Not is 'filled' only, but 'full,' not filled for a time, but lastingly, abidingly, and full of the Holy Ghost, of God. God is a consuming fire, and where He dwelleth He must consume all that is alien or offensive to Him, and He dwelleth in us in proportion as we shrink not from that burning touch,

which often, with pain that reaches to the very inmost soul, cleanses and makes us meet for His indwelling by consuming what is unfit.

68

God's chief gift to those who seek Him is Himself; here in grace, hereafter in glory; here to the soul, veiled in Sacraments, hereafter with unveiled Face to gaze on His beauty and be filled with His love; here in secret thrillings of joy that He hath given thee grace to choose Him for thy portion; there Himself to be thy portion, thy possession, thy treasure, the fulness of thy joy, enfolding thee and filling thee, and transporting thee with joy, which the holiest thought of apostles never reached unto in this life (for heart of man hath not conceived it), the joy of thine own Lord.

69

'All things are yours, the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come;' all is thine; for all may serve thee, and further thy salvation. All men, all creatures, all things, the very opposite, shall serve thee;—Angels, for they are ministering spirits sent forth to minister to such as shall be heirs of salvation; and devils, for they shall but try thy faith as God permits them; life, to gain fresh degrees of love; and death, to enter into thy Master's joy. All things present are thine, to use to thy glory, and the good things to come are thine already by faith and hope.

70

Mighty is the power of prayer for yourselves, your families, your sick, your weak, your erring, all you love ; if they stand, that they may be strengthened ; if weak-hearted, that they may be comforted and holpen. Mighty is the power of prayer, because it seems so weak ; for a man's weakness is God's strength. Mighty is it, for it is the gift of God the Holy Ghost, and ascends to God the Father, in the words, through the merits, by the Intercession of Him who is God and Man, our Redeeming Lord and God.

71

Seek not first, as men even now do, earthly things, earthly pleasures, earthly comforts, luxuries, riches, and then, over and above, God, as though God were a mere appendage to His gifts, the Creator to His poor creatures ; but seek ye first God, and then from Him and in Him ye shall have all things else.

72

Poisons, and the physician's hand, remedy sickness. In our Great Physician's hand all things work to good to them who love God.

73

Far sweeter one whisper of God's love in thine inmost soul, known to thee alone, one thrilling touch

of His good pleasure, than the whole world without His Presence. But then will ye have some taste how riches and all their train of vanity, how luxury, the pleasures of sense, are a thick, damp, heavy mist, hindering the Sun of Righteousness from kindling the soul's love and drawing it up to Him.

74

Mutual intercession is placed by the apostle among the primary duties of Christians: 'I exhort, therefore, that first of all supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men,' etc. It is on this pattern that the intercessions of our daily public prayers are framed. In His hands the prayers of those whom He teaches to pray issue in the salvation of the souls of their brethren. He wills that so great a gift as man's salvation should not be bestowed without prayer to Him. Daily prayer for all these things is especially acceptable to Him who willeth that men should always pray, and not faint. It is befitting our humility and His majesty that we should not weary of asking the same things. It 'is good and acceptable in the sight of' Him who makes it acceptable—our God and Saviour.

75

Seek we Him now that He may be found; seek we Him who with Bleeding Hands has sought and found

us; seek we Him in self-denying deeds of charity in His house, and honouring Him in it in His Sacraments, in the daily duties of our calling, in all devoted service to which He calls any of us; and He who was found of us when we sought Him not, how much more will He be with you when you seek Him here in peace, which passeth all understanding; and if His reward in this life, the hundredfold, pass all understanding, what must that be which is not an hundredfold only, but Infinite, Boundless,—yea, God Himself, who is Love, wherein to rest and to love for evermore!

76

Any self-denial, however simple, done for love of your Redeemer, is accepted by Him as a bearing of His Cross. Self-denials which you, many of you, exercise for a corruptible crown, might set you in the way, at least, not to lose the incorruptible.

77

'Christianity is the imitation of God,'—conformity to God made man, to whom you have been conformed; with whom you have been made one; your oneness with whom has been so often renewed; for in the Holy Communion (as is so often repeated to you), if we partake worthily, 'we dwell in Christ, and Christ in us; we are one with Christ, and Christ with us.'

78

Many of you, my sons, are provided with superfluities. You have not to stint yourselves as to the pleasures of your age. Day by day, I suppose, passes with all conveniences of life or amusements, or some self-indulgences, which, though not directly sinful, are rather injurious. If our Lord was to come now, in how many do you think that you could tell Him that you had fed Him, clothed Him, supplied Him when sick? Some, I fear, could not say that they had bestowed as much on Christ as upon their dogs.

79

Thoughts are wasted unless turned into action.

80

The sun's strong light streaming into our dwellings shows us the specks of dust unseen before. It belongs to saints to believe themselves last of all.

81

It is because perseverance is so difficult, even when supported by the grace of God, that new beginnings are so valuable. For new beginnings are the life of perseverance. God, by nature alike and by grace, makes new beginnings the whole history of our being. We shall only know at the Judgment Day the value of

those new beginnings which God gives us daily by the very disposition of day and night, and the necessity of sleep. We can have no thought what we should lose if we could dispense with sleep, and prolong day into day, by the loss of new beginnings. Every New Year we have a thousand of such new beginnings. Listen to Keble, who says—

> New mercies each returning day
> Hover around us while we pray;
> New perils past, new sins forgiven,
> New thoughts of God, new hopes of heaven.

82

Is our nineteenth-century Christianity, in all which concerns our likes, in that habitual every-day course of life whereby we are pleasing or displeasing God, our standard of what is right or wrong, like that which our Lord left on earth for us to follow?

83

God speaketh, but it is with us to hearken or no. It is much, nay, it is everything, not to turn away the ear, to be willing to hearken, not to drown His Voice. 'The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him.' It is a secret hushed voice, a gentle intercourse of heart to heart, a still small voice, whispering to the inward ear. How should we hear it, if we fill our ears and our hearts with the din of this world, its empty

tumult, its excitement, its fretting vanities or cares or passions, or anxieties or show or rivalries, and its whirl of emptiness! A loud voice will often not reach an occupied heart. The Voice of the Son of God in the flesh, though it waked Lazarus from the dead, reached not those whose ears and minds were filled with love of the praise of men.

84

What we do in deeds of love, we do to Christ; what any refuse, they refuse to Him; He who said to Saul, 'Why persecutest thou Me?' He is sinned against in all unlove; in all deeds of love He is loved. Whoso injureth another, injureth Christ; whoso neglecteth others, neglecteth Christ; whoso gives or toils for others, denies self for others, bears with, cheers, trains, helps, comforts, others for the love of Christ, lays up a store with Christ, who has said, 'What thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.'

85

The Holy Spirit does not limit Himself to His operations in us. He, too, has an office towards the Father. He intercedeth for us, in us. He does not only intensify our prayers; He does not only give us perseverance in prayer; He does not only teach us what to pray for, the life of our prayers; He Himself intercedeth for us. The prayers which we utter according to the mind of God, the secret, unspoken yearnings of the soul, He

suggests, He inspires, He enables, He upbears. But also He Himself intercedes for us. How should we be hopeless about our prayers, when they are no longer our prayers but His prayers in us who is Himself Almighty God, who Himself utters our longings as His own!

86

In each soul which is won to God 'Jesus sees of the travail of His soul and is satisfied.' Each lost sheep which is found, Jesus lays on His shoulders rejoicing, and says to His friends, the blessed Angels, 'Rejoice with Me, for I have found My sheep which was lost.' Such joy there is over every one won to the faith, over every one who, having forfeited his baptismal grace, is restored by true repentance and conversion, so that he who was dead again lives; such joy over every true confession, in which the soul, whose sins were scarlet, is washed white as snow in the blood of Jesus, and Jesus says, 'Thy sins be forgiven thee.'

87

Watch over all your acts, thoughts, deeds, as having to give account of all; repent, day by day, of '*all* the sins, negligences, and ignorances' of *all* your past lives; bring them all before Him, at least when you repeat His Son's own words, 'Forgive us our trespasses;' pray Him, for His Son's sake, to forgive them all, to blot out all; do 'works meet for repentance,' acts of

restitution, acts of humiliation, acts of penitence, acts especially of self-denying charity, whereby, Scripture saith, 'iniquity is purged away:' and though you must see your sins once again read out of that book at the Judgment Day, they will not be your condemnation.

88

Not a single sigh for past sins escapes His ears; not a groan of the heart but is heard by Him; not a tear falls to the ground but He putteth it in His bottle; not a breathing of the soul after His holiness; not a loathing of our own unholiness; not an act of self-abasement, or humbling ourselves for sin; not a yearning of the soul for a purity which it hath not, if it be but followed by action; not an act of mercy, done in hopes that we may 'obtain mercy;' not an act of self-denial in token of our displeasure and self-condemnation at our offences, but we shall find there; every fragment of our poor sorrow and service we shall find there, gathered and stored up, and nothing lost.

89

Each wish to pray is a breath from heaven to strengthen and refresh us; each act of faith done to amend our prayers is wrought in us by Him, and draws us to Him, and His gracious look on us. Each amends our prayers, and our amended prayers are His gifts to amend our lives, and so we may go on, in slow, it may

be, through our manifold infirmities, yet ceaseless progress, until we find in His gracious and merciful presence the end of our prayers, our faith, our hopes, our lives.

90

All the complaining in the world is, in truth, to deny God knows what is best for each of us, and knowing, sends it.

91

Conscience is a very tender thing. If we listen to it, to know ourselves or what we are doing, it speaks to us more plainly. If we hush it, attend not to it, stifle it, we deaden it until it awake to condemn us.

92

Joy is of God, and in God. Complete joy will be when we are complete in God; in this our pilgrimage, it commences, grows, decays, is weak, or sickly, or overcast, or withdrawn, as we are more or less in Him. The highest saints on whom their Saviour's countenance most fully shone, still had their seasons of dreariness, and exclaimed, 'How long wilt Thou absent Thyself, O Lord? for ever? How long wilt Thou hide Thy Face from us?' The faint uncertain gleams of that countenance are vouchsafed to such as most of us, lighten our darkness, or are withheld, as we are in earnest seeking to do His will, or are remiss. But steadfast-

ness of purpose, an earnest desire to serve Him with a whole heart, is the condition of all joy. To have His joy poured within us, we must be capable to joy in God, and they only can joy in God who are at peace with Him; they only are at peace who love Him above all besides.

93

Twelve only were selected by our Lord out of the world, on which foundation to build His Church; twelve only to be witnesses of Him unto the uttermost parts of the earth, witnesses of His resurrection; twelve only, in whose souls He poured the hidden treasure of His teaching, which the rude world were not fitted to receive, and which they, as occasion offered, having 'heard in the ear, were to publish on the housetop;' twelve only, or rather the eleven, to whom during those mysterious forty days 'He spake of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God;' whom He bade to 'go, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you alway, unto the end of the world.' And how should we not reverence them? All the blessings of the gospel came to us through them.

94

Not patriarchs only and prophets, but apostles, evangelists, martyrs, teachers, saints, all, of every age

and tongue, and people and nation, who have been perfected, young and aged, boys and virgins, the early-perfected and grey-haired holiness, the poor, and they who have made themselves poor for the kingdom of heaven, call us by their faithful lives, and peaceful deaths, beckon us, as it were, from Paradise, and tell us, 'We know Whom we have believed; Whom we sought (yea, Who sought us), we have found; Whom we chose, we have; 'one thing we asked of the Lord, this we have desired: to behold the fair beauty of the Lord, and to visit His temple.' And now we dwell in His courts, and behold His face, and are filled with His love, whom, not seeing, we believed and loved.

95

Recollect we that our Lord's Day services, as our days, are numbered. To most of us they are our chief and fullest devotions of this life, and so our chief preparation for the endless worship of heaven; they are means of gathering strength for our six days of toil, of knitting on week to week in one holy company, of hallowing our week to God with whom we begin.

96

O for hearts of fire, for fiery zeal for souls; that, if we can do no more, we may yet plead with God with burning thoughts, burning longings, burning desires, for God's glory in the salvation of souls!

97

Pass not at once from the things of this world to prayer, but collect thyself. Think what thou art, what God is; thyself a child, and God thy Father; but also thyself dust and ashes, God a consuming fire, before whom angels hide their faces; thyself unholy, God holy; thyself a sinner, God thy Judge. And to this it will help, before you first pray, reverently to repeat your belief, as confessing before God all He has wrought for you, and His own majesty; or, as they did of old, to think of the last four things—Death, Judgment, Heaven, Hell; what thou hopest, everlasting life; what thou fearest, unceasing misery; what thou needest, God's pardoning, preventing, assisting, perfecting grace, to save thee from the one, and along a strait and narrow path to guide thee to the other: nay, further yet, God's help, that thou mayest fear the one and hope for the other; for the very power to dread hell, or to hope for heaven, is itself a great gift of God.

98

Every act by which a man gives way to sin blinds him to that sin, and in a measure to all other sin. For it blunts the fineness of his feeling of good and evil; it dulls his sight to the beauty of good and the deformity of evil; it makes his ear heavy, that he hears no longer the gentle whispers of the voice of God. Everything, good or evil, in the soul, reveals or hides God's light to it.

99

Our trial, by God's appointment and mercy, lies mostly in some few things. We bring trials upon ourselves, which God did not intend for us. We increase manifoldly our own trials by every consent to sin.

100

The very temptation to sin becomes, when you know it well, the sentinel to warn you against it.

The Feast of Tabernacles.

I will yet make thee to dwell in tabernacles, as in the days of the solemn feasts.—HOSEA XII. 9.

THE Feast of Tabernacles was the yearly remembrance of God's miraculous guidance and support of Israel through the wilderness. It was the link which bound on their deliverance from Egypt to the close of their pilgrim-life and their entrance into their rest. The passage of the Red Sea, like Baptism, was the beginning of God's promises. By it Israel was saved from Egypt, and from bondage, and was born to be a people of God. Yet, being the beginning, it was plainly not the completion; nor could they themselves complete it. Enemies, more powerful than they, had to be dispossessed; 'the great and terrible wilderness, the fiery serpents, and scorpions, and the land of exceeding drought, where was no water,' had to be surmounted; no food was there, no water for so vast a multitude. It was a time of the visible presence of God. He promised, 'I send an Angel before thee to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I

have prepared.' He brought them forth water out of the rock of flint, and fed them with manna, which, He says, 'thy fathers knew not. Thy raiment,' He appeals to them, 'waxed not old, nor did thy foot swell these forty years; thy shoe is not waxen old upon thy foot; ye have not eaten bread, neither have drunk wine nor strong drink, that ye may know that I am the Lord your God.' It was a long trial-time, in which they were taught entire dependence upon God; a time of sifting, in which God proved His faithfulness to those who persevered. Standing there between the beginning and the end of the accomplishment of God's promise to Abraham and to them, it was a type of His whole guidance of His people at all times. It was a pledge that God would lead His own, if often 'by a way which they knew not,' yet to rest with Him. The yearly commemoration of it was not only a thanksgiving for God's past mercies, it was a confession also of their present relation to God, that 'here we have no continuing city;' that they still needed the guidance and support of God; and that their trust was not in themselves, nor in man, but in Him. This they themselves saw. When they said, 'Leave a fixed habitation and dwell in a chance abode,' they meant that the command to dwell in tabernacles was given to teach us that no man must rely on the height or strength of his house, or on its good arrangements, though it abound in all good; nor may he rely on the help of any man, not though he were lord and king of the whole earth, but must trust in Him

by whose word the worlds were made. For with Him alone is power and faithfulness, so that whereinsoever any man may place his trust, he shall receive no consolation from it, since in God alone is refuge and trust, as it is said, 'Whoso putteth his trust in the Lord, mercy embraceth him on every side, and I will say unto the Lord, My Refuge, and my Fortress, my God; in Him will I trust.'

The Feast of Tabernacles was also a yearly thanksgiving for the mercies with which God had blessed the year. The joy must have been even the greater, since it followed, by five days only, after the mournful Day of Atonement, its rigid fast from evening to evening, and its confession of sin. Joy is greater when ushered in by sorrow. Sorrow for sin is the condition of joy in God. The Feast of Tabernacles was, as far as it could be, a sort of Easter after Lent. At the time when Israel rejoiced in the good gifts of the year, God bade them express in act their fleeting condition in this life. It must have been a striking confession of the slight tenure of all earthly things, when their kings and great men, their rich men, and all who lived at ease, had all, at the command of God, to leave their ceiled houses, and dwell for seven days in rude booths, constructed for the season, pervious in some measure to the sun and wind, with no fixed foundation, to be removed when the festival was passed. 'Because,' says a Jewish writer, 'at the time of the gathering of the increase from the field, man wishes to go from the field to his house to

make a fixed abode there, the law was anxious, lest, on account of this fixed abode, his heart should be lifted up as having found a sort of palace, and he should "wax fat and kick." Therefore it is written, "All that are Israelites born shall dwell in booths." Whoso begins to think himself a citizen of this world, and not a foreigner, him God biddeth, leaving his ordinary dwelling, to remove into a "temporary lodging," in order that, leaving these thoughts, he may learn to acknowledge that he is only a stranger in this world, and not a citizen, in that he dwells as in a stranger's hut, and so should not attribute too much to the shadow of his beams, but "dwell under the shadow of the Almighty."'

Every year the law was publicly read in the Feast. The Feast of Tabernacles typifies the pilgrim-state, the life of simple faith in God, for which God provides; poor in this world's goods, but rich in God, the Church militant dwells, as it were, in tabernacles; hereafter we hope to be 'received into everlasting habitations' in the Church triumphant.

MINOR PROPHETS, p. 79.

Micah.

The word of the Lord that came to Micah the Morasthite . . . which he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem.—MICAH I. 1.

MICAH or Micaiah the Morasthite, was so called probably to distinguish him from his great predecessor Micaiah, son of Imlah, in the reign of Ahab. His name, which he himself explains, was no chance name. To the Hebrews, to whom names were so much more significant, parts of the living language, it recalled the name of his great predecessor, his standing alone against all the prophets of Ahab, his prophecy, his suffering, his evidenced truth. The truth of prophecy was set upon the issue of the battle before Ramoth-Gilead. In the presence of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, as well as of Ahab, the 400 prophets of Ashtaroth had promised to Ahab the prize he longed for. One solitary discriminating voice was heard amid that clamorous multitude, forewarning Ahab that he would perish, his people would be scattered. On the one side was that loud triumphant chorus of 'all the prophets, Go up to Ramoth-Gilead, and prosper; for the Lord shall de-

liver it into the king's hand;' on the other, one solemn voice exhibiting before them that sad spectacle which the morrow's sun should witness: 'I saw all Israel scattered upon the hills, as sheep that have not a shepherd: and the Lord said, These have no master; let them return every one to his house in peace.' Micaiah was smitten, imprisoned, and, apparently, ended his ministry, appealing from that small audience of the armies of Israel and Judah to the whole world, which has ever since looked back on that strife with interest and awe,—'Hear, ye peoples, each one of them.' God, who guided the archer 'shooting at a venture,' fulfilled the words which He had put into the prophet's mouth. God's word had found Ahab, although *disguised.* Jehoshaphat, the imperilled, returned home to relate the issue. The conflict between God's truth and idol falsehood was doubtless long remembered in Judah. And now, when the strife had penetrated into Judah, another Micaiah arose, his name the old watchword, 'Who is like the Lord?' He prefixed to his prophecy that same summons to the whole world to behold the issue of the conflict which God had once accredited, and in that issue had given an earnest of the victory of His truth, there, thenceforth, and for ever.

The prophet was born a villager in Moresheth-gath, a village, St. Jerome saith, 'east of Eleutheropolis, where what was formerly his grave is now a church.' Since it was his birth-place and his burial-place, it was probably his home also. The chief scene of his ministry

was Jerusalem. He names it in the beginning of his prophecy, as the place where the idolatries, and, with the idolatries, all the other sins of Judah were concentrated. The two capitals, Samaria and Jerusalem, were the chief objects of the word of God in him, because the corruption of each kingdom streamed forth from them. The sins which he rebukes are chiefly those of the capital—extreme oppression, violence among the rich, bribing among judges, priests, prophets; building up the capital even by cost of life, or actual bloodshed; spoliation, expulsion of the powerless, of women and children, from their homes; covetousness, cheating in dealings, pride; these, of course, may be manifoldly repeated in lesser places of resort and of judgment. But it is 'Zion and Jerusalem which are so built up with blood.' Zion and Jerusalem which are on that ground, 'to be plowed as a field;' it is the city 'to which the Lord's voice crieth,' whose rich men are 'full of violence;' it is the 'daughter of Zion' which 'is to go forth out of the city, and go to Babylon.' Especially they are the heads and princes of the people whom he upbraids for perversion of justice and for oppression. Even the good kings of Judah seem to have been powerless to restrain the general corruption.

Micah was called to the prophetic office somewhat later than Isaiah. Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, had doubtless been withdrawn to their rest. Hosea alone, in grey-haired might, was still protesting in vain against the deepening corruptions of Israel.

The utter dislocation of society, the bursting of all the most sacred bands which bind man to man together, described in the last chapter of his book, perhaps belong most to the miserable decay in the reign of Ahaz. The idolatry spoken of also belongs probably to the time of Ahaz. In Jotham's time the people 'sacrificed and burned incense still in the high places,' but under a king so highly praised these are not likely to have been in Jerusalem. But Micah, at the very head of his prophecy, speaks of Jerusalem as the centre of the idolatries of Judah. The allusion also to child-sacrifices belongs to the time of Ahaz, who sacrificed sons of his own, and whose sacrifice others probably imitated. The mention of the special idolatry of the time, 'the statutes of Omri are kept, and all the works of the house of Ahab,' belong to the same reign, it being recorded of Ahaz especially, 'He walked in the ways of the kings of Israel, and made also molten images for Baalim,' the special sin of the house of Ahab. That character, too, which he describes, that amid all that idolatry, practical irreligion, and wickedness, 'they leant upon the Lord, and said, Is not the Lord among us? none evil can come upon us,' was just the character of Ahaz. Not until the end of his reign was he so embittered by God's chastisements that he closed His temple. Up to that time, even after he had copied the brazen altar at Damascus, he still kept up a divided allegiance to God. Urijah, the high priest, at the king's command, offered the sacrifices for the king and

the people, while Ahaz used 'the brazen altar to inquire by.' This was just the half-service which God, by Micah, rejects. It is the old history of man's half-service, faith without love, which provides that what it believes but loves not, should be done for it, and itself enacts what it prefers. Urijah was to offer the lawful sacrifices for the king and the people. Ahaz was to obtain knowledge of the future, such as he wished, in his own way—a lying future by lying acts.

Micah renewed, under Hezekiah, the prophecy of the utter destruction of Jerusalem which he had pronounced under Jotham; the prophets did not heed repeating themselves. Eloquent as they were, they were the more eloquent because eloquence was not their object. Even our Lord, with Divine wisdom, and the more probably because He had Divine wisdom, repeated in His teaching the same words. Those words sank the deeper because often repeated. So Micah repeated, doubtless oftentimes, those words which he first uttered in the days of Jotham: 'Zion shall be plowed like a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest.' Often, during perhaps those thirty years, he repeated them in vain. At the last they wrought a great repentance, and delayed, it may be, for 136 years, the destruction which he was compelled to foretell. Early in the days of Jehoiakim, about 120 years afterwards, in the public assembly, when Jeremiah was on trial for his life, 'the elders of the land' said explicitly

that the great conversion at the beginning of the reign of Hezekiah, nay, of that king himself, was wrought by the teaching of Micah. 'Men rose up,' says Jeremiah, certain of the 'elders of the land, and spake to all the assembly of the people, saying, Micah the Morasthite prophesied in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah, saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Zion shall be plowed like a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest. Did Hezekiah king of Judah and all Judah put him at all to death? did he not fear the Lord, and besought the Lord, and the Lord repented Him of the evil which He had pronounced against them?'

It may have been that single prophecy which Micah so delivered. Some have thought that it was his whole book. Jeremiah, at God's command, at one time uttered single prophecies, at another, the summary of all his prophecies. This only is certain, that the prophecy, whether these words alone or the book containing them, was delivered to all Judah, and that God moved the people through them to repentance.

The elders who quoted them probably knew them, not from tradition, but from the written book of the prophet. It was to all the people of Judah that he said it. The elders say so, and lay stress upon it by repeating it: 'Did Hezekiah king of Judah and all Judah put him at all to death?' It must have been then on some of the great festivals, when 'all Judah'

was gathered together, that Micah so spake to them.

Probably, shortly afterwards, in those first years of Hezekiah, Micah's office on earth closed. His conversion of the king and of some considerable part of Judah was probably the closing harvest of his life, after a long seed-time of tears. So God allowed His servant to 'depart in peace.'

MINOR PROPHETS, p. 288.

Malachi.

The last prophet of the Old Testament, like the forerunner of our Lord, whom he pre-announced under his own name, 'the messenger of the Lord,' willed to be but 'the voice of one crying in the wilderness;' as his great successor, who took up his message, when asked, 'Who art thou? what sayest thou of thyself?' said, 'I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord.' He mentions neither his parentage, nor birthplace, nor date; nor did he add the name of his office, and has left it to be guessed, whether the name under which he is known was the name he bore among men; so wholly did he will to be hidden. No one before him is recorded to have borne his name. It may be that he framed it for himself, and willed to be known only as what is designated 'the messenger of the Lord.' This was a favourite title with him, since, in this brief prophecy, he uses it as describing the priest's office, and that of the forerunner; whereas, before him, except once by Haggai, and once by Isaiah, it had been used only of the blessed angels. Like S. John Baptist, though afar off, he

prepared the way of the Lord by the preaching of repentance. More than other prophets, he unveils priests and people to themselves; interprets their thoughts to them, and puts those thoughts in abrupt, naked language, picturing them as demurring to every charge which he brought against them. They were not, doubtless, conscious hypocrites. For conscious hypocrisy is the sin of individuals aping the graces which others possess, and which they have not, yet wish to be held in estimation for having. Here, it is the mass which is corrupt. The true Israel are the exception: 'those who feared the Lord,' 'the jewels' of Almighty God. It is the hypocrisy of self-conceit, contented with poor, limited outward service, and pluming itself upon it. Malachi unfolds to them the meaning of their acts. His thesis is themselves, whom he unfolds to them. He interprets himself, putting into their mouths words, betokening a simple unconsciousness, either of God's goodness or their own evil. 'Yet ye say, Wherein hast Thou loved us?' This was their inward thought, as it is the thought of all ungrateful to God. But his characteristic is that he puts these thoughts into abrupt, bold, bad words, which might startle them by their hideousness, as if he would say, 'This is what your acts mean.' He exhibits the worm and the decay which lay under the whited exterior. 'Ye say, Wherein have we despised Thy name?' Perhaps they were already learning not to pronounce the proper name of God, while they caused it to be despised, or they pro-

nounced it with reverent pause, while they showed that they held cheap God and His service. 'Ye say, The table of the Lord is contemptible. Ye say, The table of the Lord is polluted; and the fruit thereof, his meat, is contemptible.' Their acts said it. What a reading of thoughts! 'Ye said also, Behold what a weariness!' It is the language of the heart in all indevotion. 'Ye say, Wherefore?' as if innocently unconscious of the grounds of God's judgment. 'Wherein have we robbed Thee?' The language of those who count the earth as their own. 'Ye say, Wherein have we wearied him? When ye say, Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and in them doth He delight, or, Where is our God of judgment?' The heart's speech in all envy at the prosperity of the wicked.

Yet the object of all this unfolding them to themselves is their repentance. They professed to 'delight' in the coming 'of the messenger of the covenant,' yet their deeds were such as would be burned up with His coming, not rewarded. . . . Malachi closes with the same prophecy with which S. John Baptist prepared our Lord's coming: 'His fan is in His hand, and He will throughly purge His floor, and will gather the wheat into His garner, but the chaff He shall burn with fire unquenchable.' The unspeakable tenderness of God towards 'those who fear His name,' and the severity to those who finally rebel, are perhaps nowhere more vividly declared than in these closing words of the Old

Testament. Yet the love of God, as ever, predominates, and the last prophet closes with the word 'Remember,' and with one more effort to avert the curse which they were bringing upon themselves. It has been said, 'Malachi is like a late evening, which closes a long day, but he is, at the same time, a morning twilight, which bears in its bosom a glorious day.'

Davison on Prophecy says: 'When prophecy was to be withdrawn from the ancient Church of God, its last light was mingled with the rising beams of the Sun of Righteousness. Prophecy had been the oracle of Judaism and of Christianity, to uphold the authority of the one, and reveal the promise of the other. And now its latest admonitions were like those of a faithful departing minister, embracing and summing up his duties. Resigning its charge to the *personal* precursor of Christ, it expired with the Gospel upon its lips.'

The office of the prophets was to convey in forcible words, which God gave them, His message to His people. The poetic form was but an accident. God, who knows the hearts of His creatures whom He has made, knows better than we why He chose Malachi as an instrument. Zechariah, full of imagination, he chose some years before. Had Malachi spoken in imaginative language like that of Ezekiel, to whom God says, 'Thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: and they hear thy words, but they do them not,' it may be that they would have acted then as they did in the

time of Ezekiel. It may be that times like those of Malachi, apathetic, self-justifying, murmuring, self-complacent, needed a sterner, abrupter, more startling voice to awaken them. 'Wisdom was justified in her children.' God wrought by him a reformation for the time being. He gave through him a warning to the generation when our Lord should come, that He should come as their Judge as well as their Saviour, and how they should stand in the Day of His Coming. He gave it as a book to His whole Church, whereby to distinguish seeming from real service. Parting words are always solemn, as closing the past and opening out a future of expectation before us. The position of Malachi, as the last of the prophets, bids us the more solemnly prepare for that dread Day, our Lord's Second Coming, which he foretold in one with the First, warning us that we deceive not ourselves, in unconsciousness of our own evil and remembrance of our seeming good, until He professes unto us, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, ye that work iniquity.'

MINOR PROPHETS, p. 594.

Nineveh.

THE description of the size of Nineveh given in the book of the prophet Jonah remarkably corresponds alike with the ancient accounts and modern investigations. Jonah describes it as 'a city of three days' journey.' This obviously means its circumference. Diodorus says of this city, 'For no one afterwards built a city of such compass, and with walls so magnificent.' All accounts agree with the statement of Strabo,—'Nineveh was much larger than Babylon.' The sixty miles of Diodorus exactly correspond with the three days' journey of Jonah.

His preaching seems to have lasted only one day. 'He went,' we are told, 'one day's journey' in the city. The 150 stadia are nearly nineteen miles, a day's journey, so that Jonah walked through it from end to end, repeating that one cry which God had commanded him to cry. We seem to see the solitary figure of the prophet, clothed (as was the prophet's dress) in that one rough garment of haircloth, uttering the cry which we almost hear, echoing in street after street, 'Yet forty days, and Nineveh over-

thrown.' The words which he says he cried and said, belong to that one day only. For on that one day only was there still a respite of 'forty days.' In one day the grace of God prevailed. The conversion of a whole people, upon one day's preaching of a single stranger, stands in contrast with the many years during which God says, 'Since the day that your fathers came forth out of the land of Egypt, unto this day, I have sent unto you all My servants the prophets, daily rising up early and sending them, yet they hearkened not unto Me.' Many of us have wondered what the prophet did in the other thirty-nine days; people have imagined the prophet preaching as moderns would, or telling them his own wondrous story of his desertion of God, his miraculous punishment, and, on his repentance, his miraculous deliverance. Jonah says nothing of this. The one point he brought out was the conversion of the Ninevites. This he dwells on in circumstantial details. His own part he suppresses; he would be, like S. John Baptist, but the voice of one crying in the wild waste of a city of violence.

This simple message of Jonah bears an analogy to what we find elsewhere in Holy Scripture. The great preacher of repentance, S. John Baptist, repeated doubtless oftentimes that one cry, 'Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.' Our Lord vouchsafed to begin His own office with those self-same words. And probably, among the civilised but savage inhabitants of Nineveh, that one cry was more impressive than

any other would have been. Simplicity is always impressive. They were four words which God caused to be written on the wall amid Belshazzar's impious revelry—'Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin.' We all remember the touching history of Jesus, the son of Anan, an unlettered rustic who, 'four years before the war, when Jerusalem was in complete peace and affluence,' burst in upon the people at the Feast of Tabernacles with one oft-repeated cry: 'A voice from the east, a voice from the west, a voice from the four winds, a voice on Jerusalem and the Temple, a voice on the bridegrooms and the brides, a voice on the whole people;' how he went about through all the lanes of the city, repeating, day and night, this one cry, and, when scourged until his bones were laid bare, echoed every lash with 'Woe, woe to Jerusalem,' and continued as his daily dirge, and his one response to daily good or ill treatment, 'Woe, woe to Jerusalem!' The magistrates, and even the cold Josephus, thought that there was something in it above nature.

In Jerusalem no effect was produced, because they had filled up the measure of their sins, and God had abandoned them. All conversion is the work of the grace of God. That of Nineveh remains in the history of mankind, an insulated instance of God's overpowering grace. The words under which he threatened their destruction pointed to a miraculous overthrow. It was a turning upside down, like the overthrow of the five cities of the plain, which are known throughout the

Old Testament, and still throughout the Mohammedan East, by the same name—'the overthrow.'

The Assyrians also, amidst their cruelties, had a great reverence for their gods, and (as appears from the inscriptions) assigned to them their national greatness. The variety of ways in which this is expressed implies a far more personal belief than the statements which we find among the Romans, and would put to shame almost every English manifesto. They may have been then the more prepared to fear the prophecy of their destruction from the true God. Layard relates that he has known a Christian priest frighten a whole Mussulman town to repentance by proclaiming that he had a Divine mission to announce,—a coming earthquake or plague. These may have been predisposing causes, but the completeness of the repentance, not outward only, but inward, 'turning from their evil way,' is, in its extent, unexampled.

The fact rests on the authority of 'One greater than Jonah.' Our Lord relates it as a fact. He contrasts people with people, the penitent heathen with the impenitent Jews, the inferior messenger who prevailed, with Himself whom His own received not. 'The men of Nineveh shall rise up with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here.'

The chief subject of the repentance of the Ninevites agrees also remarkably with their character. It is mentioned in the proclamation of the king and his

nobles,—'Let them turn every one from his evil way, and *from the violence* that is in their hands.' Out of the whole catalogue of their sins, conscience singled out *violence.* This incidental notice, contained in the one word, exactly corresponds in substance with the fuller description in the prophet Nahum: 'Woe to the bloody city; it is all full of lies and *robbery;* the *prey* departeth not.' 'The lion did tear in pieces enough for his whelps, and strangled for his lionesses, and filled his holes with *prey*, and his dens with *ravin.*' 'The Assyrian records,' says Layard, 'are nothing but a dry register of military campaigns, spoliations, and cruelties.'

The direction that the animals also should be included in the common mourning was according to the analogy of Eastern custom. The Ninevites had a right feeling (as God Himself says) that the mercies of God were over man and beast; and so they joined the beasts with themselves, hoping that the Creator of all would the rather have mercy on their common distress. 'His tender mercies are over all his works: Thou, Lord, shalt save both man and beast.' The name of the king cannot yet be ascertained. But since this mission of Jonah fell in the latter part of his prophetic office, and so, probably, in the latter part of the reign of Jeroboam, or even later, the Assyrian king was probably Tvalush III., or the Pul of Holy Scripture. For Pul was the first Assyrian monarch through whom Israel was weakened, and God had foreshown by Amos that through

the third it would be destroyed. Jonah's human fears would, in that case, have been soon fulfilled. Characteristic, on account of the earnestness which it implies, is the account that the men of Nineveh proclaimed the fast before tidings reached the king himself. The account is in harmony with that vast extent of the city, as of Babylon, of which 'the residents related that, after the outer portions of the city were taken, the inhabitants of the central part did not know that they were taken.' It would scarcely have occurred to one who did not know the fact.

The history of Jonah, after God had spared Nineveh, has the same characteristic touches. He leaves his own character unexplained, its severity rebuked by God, unexcused and unpalliated. He had some special repugnance to be the messenger of mercy to the Ninevites. 'For this cause,' he says to God, 'I fled before to Tarshish, for I know that Thou art a merciful God, and repentest Thee of the evil.' The circumstances of his time explain that repugnance. He was the contemporary of Hosea, who foretold of his people, the ten tribes, 'They shall not dwell in the Lord's land, they shall eat unclean things in Assyria.' God, in giving him his commission to go to Nineveh, the capital of Assyria, and 'cry against it,' assigned as the reason, 'for its wickedness is come up before Me,'—words which, to Jonah, would suggest the memory of the wickedness of Sodom and its destruction. Jonah was a prophet, but he was also an Israelite. He was commanded by

God to call to repentance the capital of the country by which his own people, nay, the people of his God, were to be carried captive. And he rebelled. *We* know more of the love of God than Jonah, for we have known the love of the Incarnation and the Redemption. And yet were it made known to us, that some European or Asiatic people were to carry our people captive out of our land, more than would be willing to confess it of themselves, (whatever sense they might have of the awfulness of God's judgments, and whatever feelings belonging to our common humanity,) would still inwardly rejoice to hear that such a calamity as the earthquake at Lisbon befell its capital. Jonah's murmuring related solely to God's mercy shown to them as to this world. For the Ninevites had repented, and so were in the grace of God. The older of us remember what awful joy was felt when that three days' mortal strife at Leipzig at length was won, in which 107,000 were killed or wounded; or when, out of 647,000 men who swept across Europe (a mass larger than the whole population of Nineveh), only '35,000 escaped—125,000 were slain in battle, 132,000 perished by cold, fatigue, and famine.' A few years ago how was Sebastopol and the Crimea in men's mouths, although that war is reputed to have cost the five nations involved in it 700,000 lives, more, probably, than all the inhabitants of Nineveh. Men forget or abstract themselves from all the individual sufferings, and think only of the result of the whole. A humane historian says of the

battle of Leipzig, 'A prodigious sacrifice, but one which, great as it was, humanity has no cause to regret, for it delivered Europe from French bondage, and the world from revolutionary aggression.' He says, on the Russian campaign of Napoleon I., 'The faithful throughout Europe repeated the words of the Psalm, "Efflavit Deus et dissipantur."'

Amid all Jonah remains the same throughout. It is one strong impetuous will, bent on having no share in that which was to bring destruction on his people, fearless of death, and ready to give up his life. In the same mind he gives himself to death amid the storm, and, when his mission was accomplished, asks for death in the words of his great predecessor, Elijah, when he fled from Jezebel. He probably justified his impatience to himself by the precedent of so great a prophet. But, although he complains, he complains to God of Himself. And having complained, Jonah waits. It may be that he thought that, although God did not execute His judgments on the fortieth day, He might still fulfil them. He had been accustomed to the thought of the long-suffering of God, delaying even when He struck at last. The patience of God amid the prophet's impatience, the still, gentle inquiry (such as He often puts to the conscience now), 'Doest thou well to be angry?' and His final conviction of the prophet out of his own feelings towards one of God's inanimate creatures, none would have ventured to picture, who had not known or experienced it.

In regard to the miracles in Jonah's history, over and above the fact that they occur in Holy Scripture, we have our Lord's own word for their truth. He has set His seal on the whole of the Old Testament. He has directly authenticated, by His own Divine authority, the physical miracle of Jonah's preservation for three days and nights in the belly of the fish; and the yet greater moral miracle of the conversion of the Ninevites. He speaks of them both as facts, and of the stay of Jonah in the fish's belly as a type of His own stay in the heart of the earth. He speaks of it also as a miraculous sign.

It is perhaps a part of the simplicity of Jonah's narrative, that he relates these great miracles as naturally as he does the most ordinary events. To God nothing is great or small, and the prophet, deeply as he feels God's mercy, relates the means which God employed, as if it had been one of those every-day miracles of His power and love, of which men think so little because God worketh them every day.

MINOR PROPHETS, p. 253.

Comment on Haggai.

'I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land.'—HAG. II. 6.

IT is one universal shaking of all this our world, and the heavens over it, of which the prophet speaks. He does not speak only of 'signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars,' which might be, and yet the frame of the world itself might remain. It is a shaking such as would involve the dissolution of this our system, as S. Paul draws out its meaning: 'this word, once more, signifieth the removing of the things which are shaken, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.' Prophecy, in its long perspective, uses a continual foreshortening, speaking of things in relation to their eternal meaning and significance, as to that which shall survive when heaven and earth, and even time, shall have passed away. It blends together the beginning and the earthly end; the preparation and the result; the commencement of redemption and its completion; our Lord's coming in His humility and in His majesty. Scarce any prophet but exhibits things in their intrinsic relation, of

which time is but an accident. It is the rule, not the exception. The Seed of the woman, who should bruise the serpent's head, was promised on the Fall; to Abraham, the blessing through his seed; by Moses, the prophet like unto him; to David, an everlasting covenant. Joel unites the outpouring of the Spirit of God on the Day of Pentecost and the hatred of the world till the Day of Judgment; Isaiah, God's judgments on the land and the day of final judgment; the deliverance from Babylon, and the first coming of Christ; the glories of the Church, the new heavens and the new earth which shall remain for ever, and the unquenched fire and the undying worm of the lost.

Our Lord Himself so blends together the destruction of Jerusalem and the days of Antichrist, and the end of the world, that it is difficult to separate them, so as to say what belongs exclusively to either. The prophecy is an answer to two distinct questions of the apostles, first, 'When shall these things (the destruction of the Temple) be?' secondly, 'And what shall be the sign of Thy Coming and of the end of the world?' Our Lord answers the two questions in one. Some things seem to belong to the First Coming, as 'the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel,' and the flight from 'Judæa into the mountains.' But the exceeding deceiveableness is authoritatively interpreted by S. Paul (2 Thess. v. 2-10) of a distant time; and our Lord Himself, having said that 'all these things' of which the apostles inquired should take place in that generation, speaks of His absence as of a man taking a far journey,

and says that not 'the angels in heaven knew that hour, neither the Son,' which precludes the idea that He had just before declared that the whole would take place in that generation.

So then here. There was a general shaking upon earth before our Lord came. Empires rose and fell. The Persian fell before Alexander's. Alexander's world-empire was ended by his sudden death in youth; of his four successors, two only continued, and they, too, fell before the Romans; then were the Roman civil wars, until, under Augustus, the temple of Janus was shut. 'For it greatly beseemed a work ordered by God, that many kingdoms should be confederated in one empire, and that the universal preaching might find the people easily accessible who were held under the rule of one state.' In the heavens was the star which led the wise men, the manifestation of angels to the shepherds, the preternatural darkness at the Passion, the ascension into the highest heaven, and the descent of the Holy Ghost, with 'a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind.' S. Ambrose says, 'God had moved heaven and earth before, when He delivered the people from Egypt, when there was in heaven a column of fire, dry ground amid the waves, a wall in the sea, a path in the waters, in the wilderness there was multiplied a daily harvest of heavenly food (the manna), the rock gushed into fountains of waters. But He moved it afterwards, also, in the Passion of the Lord Jesus, when the heaven was darkened, the sun shrunk back, the rocks were rent,

the graves opened, the dead were raised, the dragon, conquered in his waters, saw the fishers of men, not only sailing on the sea, but also walking without peril. The dry ground also was moved when the unfruitful people of the nations began to ripen to a harvest of devotion and faith,—"So that more were the children of the forsaken, than of her which had a husband;" and "the desert flourished like a lily."' S. Augustine says: 'He moved earth in that great miracle of the birth from the Virgin. He moved the sea and dry land when in the islands and in the whole world Christ is preached. So we see all nations moved to the faith.'

And yet whatever preludes of fulfilment there were at our Lord's First Coming, they were as nothing to the fulfilment which we look for in the Second, 'when the earth shall be utterly broken down; the earth clean dissolved, the earth moved exceedingly, the earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a hanging cot in a vineyard, and the transgression thereof is heavy upon it; and it shall fall and not rise again;' whereon follows an announcement of the final judgment of men and angels, and the everlasting kingdom of the blessed in the presence of God.

Of that day of the Lord, S. Peter uses our Lord's image, that it 'shall come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works therein, shall be burnt up.' 'And the Desire of all nations shall come' (Haggai ii. 7). The words can only mean this, the central longing

of all nations,—He whom they longed for, either through the knowledge of Him spread by the Jews in their dispersion, or mutely by the aching craving of the human heart, longing for the restoration from its decay. 'The earnest expectation of the creature' did not begin with the coming of Christ, nor was it limited to those who actually came to Him. 'The whole creation,' S. Paul saith, 'groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.' It was enslaved, and the better self longed to be free. Every motion of grace in the multitudinous heart of man was a longing for its Deliverer; every weariness of what it was, every fleeting vision of what was better, every sigh from out of its manifold ills, were notes of the same varied cry—'Come and help us.' Man's heart, formed in the image of God, could not but ache to be re-formed by and for Him, through an 'unknown God' who should re-form it.

This longing increased as the time drew nigh when Christ should come. The Roman biographer attests the existence of this expectation, not among the Jews only, but in the East; this was quickened doubtless among the heathen by the Jewish Sibylline book, in that amid the expectations of one sent from heaven, who should found a kingdom of righteousness, which the writer drew from the Hebrew prophets, he inserted denunciations of temporal vengeance upon the Romans, which Easterns would share. Still, although written 170 years before our Lord came, it had not apparently much effect until the time when, from the prophecies of

Daniel, it was clear that He must shortly come. The Jews who rejected our Lord, whom Haggai predicted, still were convinced that the prediction must be fulfilled before the destruction of the second temple. Since the words can only mean 'the Desire of all nations,' He or that which all nations long for, the construction of the words does not affect the meaning. Herod doubtless thought to advance his own claims on the Jewish people by his material adorning of the temple; yet, although mankind do covet gold and silver, few could seriously think that while a heathen immoral but observant poet could speak of 'gold undiscovered, and so better placed,' or our own 'of the pale and common drudge, 'twixt man and man,' a Hebrew prophet could recognise gold and silver as 'the desire of all nations.' Rabbi Akiba and S. Jerome's Jewish teachers, after our Lord came, felt no difficulty in understanding it of a person. We cannot in English express the delicacy of the phrase whereby manifoldness is combined with unity: 'The object of desire containing in itself many objects of desire.'

A great heathen master of language said to his wife, 'Fare you well, my longings,' *i.e.* I suppose, if he had analysed his feelings, he meant that she manifoldly met the longings of his heart; she had in herself manifold gifts to content them. So S. Paul sums up all the truths and gifts of the gospel, all which God shadowed out in the law, and had given us in Christ, under the name of 'the good things to come.' A pious modern

writer speaks of the 'unseen *desirableness* of the spiritual world.' The Psalmist says: 'How sweet are Thy words unto my taste,' lit. palate. It was God's words, at once collectively and individually, which was to the Psalmist so sweet. That which the whole world sighed and mourned for, knowingly or unknowingly, —light to disperse its darkness, liberty from its spiritual slavery, restoration from its degradation,—could not come to us without some one who should impart it to us.

But if Jesus was 'the longed-for of the nations' before He came, by that mute longing of need for that which it wants (as the parched ground thirsteth for the rain), how much more afterwards! So Micah and Isaiah describe many peoples inviting one another: 'Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths.' And in truth He became 'the desire of the nations,' much more than of the Jews.

So till now and in eternity Christ is the longing of all holy souls, who long for nothing else than to please Him, daily to love Him more, to worship Him better. So S. John longed for Him: 'Come, Lord Jesus.' So Isaiah: 'The desire of our soul is to Thy name, and to the remembrance of Thee; with my soul have I desired Thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek Thee early.' So S. Ignatius: 'Let fire, cross, troops of wild beasts, dissections, rendings,

scattering of bones, mincing of limbs, grinding of the whole body, all tortures of the devil, come upon me, only may I gain Jesus Christ. I seek Him who for us died; I long for Him who for us rose.'

MINOR PROPHETS, p. 494.

Comment from Malachi.

Then they that feared the Lord spake often among themselves.

THE proud speaking of the ungodly called out the piety of the God-fearing. The more the ungodly spake against God, the more these 'spake among themselves' for God. Both went on till the great day of severance. True, as those said, the distinction between righteous and wicked was not made yet, but it was stored up out of sight: they 'spake among themselves,' strengthening each other against the ungodly sayings of the ungodly; 'and the Lord hearkened, and heard it.' God, whom these thought an idle looker-on, or regardless, all the while (to speak after the manner of men), was 'bending the ear' from heaven, 'and heard.' Not one loyal, pious word for Him or His glory escaped Him.

'And a book of remembrance was written before Him.' Kings had their chronicles written, wherein men's good or ill deeds towards them were recorded. But the image is one of the oldest in Scripture, and in the self-same words, 'The Lord said to Moses, Write this, a memorial in a book.' God can only speak to us in our own language. One expression is not more

human than another, since all are so. Since with God all things are present, and memory relates to the past, to speak of God as 'remembering' is as imperfect an expression with regard to God as to speak of 'a book.' Both expressions are used only to picture vividly to our minds that our deeds are present with God, both for good and for evil, and in the Day of Judgment He will make them manifest both to men and Angels, as though read out of a book, and will requite them. So Daniel had said, 'The judgment was set, and the books were opened.' And S. John saith, 'The books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.' Our Lord bids His disciples 'rejoice in this, that your names are written in heaven.'

'And that thought upon His Name,'—rather esteemed, prized it, in contrast to those who 'despised;' as of Christ, when He should come, it is said, 'He was despised, and we esteemed Him not.' The thinking on His Name imports, not a bare thinking of, but an awful esteem and a due regard of, as so with all care to avoid all things which may tend to the dishonour of it, as always in His presence, and with respect to Him and fear of Him. 'Those are meant who always meditate on the ways of the Lord, and the knowledge of His Godhead, for His Name is Himself, and He is His Name.' 'The wise in heart, who know the mystery of the awful glorious Name.'

'And they shall be Mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels,' or perhaps better, 'And they shall be to Me, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day which I make, a peculiar treasure.' In the Day of Judgment those who fear Me and believe and maintain My Providence shall be to Me a peculiar treasure, *i.e.* a people peculiarly belonging and precious to Me, blessed in the vision and fruition of Me. For as in the old law Israel was a peculiar treasure, a special people and inheritance of God, chosen out of all nations, so in the new law, Christians and those who are righteous through grace, are the special treasure of God, and in heaven shall be His special treasure in glory, possessed by God, and possessing God. The 'peculiar treasure' is something much prized, made much store of, and guarded. Such are Christians, bought at a great price, even by the precious blood of Christ, but such more evidently shall they be, Malachi says, in all eternity, which that day of final retribution shall decide, 'joying in the participation of their Creator, by whose eternity they were fixed, by whose truth they are assured, by whose gift they are holy.'

'And I will spare them.' It is a remarkable word as used of those who should be to Him a 'peculiar treasure,' teaching, that not by their own merits they shall be this, but by His great mercy. It stands in contrast with the doom of the wicked, whom that day shall sentence to everlasting loss of God. Still the saved also shall have needed the 'tender mercy' of God,

whereby He pardoned their misdeeds, and had compassion on them. 'If Thou, Lord, shalt lay up iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?' Among those whom God will spare in that day will be countless whom the self-righteous despised as sinners. 'I will spare them, although formally sinners; I will spare them, repenting and serving Me with the service of a pious confession, as a man spareth his own son which serveth him.'

The Day of Judgment will make a great change in earthly judgment. Last shall be first, and first last; this world's sorrow shall end in joy, and worldly joy in sorrow. Afflictions shall be seen to be God's love—'Thou in very faithfulness hast afflicted me,'—and the unclouded prosperity of the ungodly to be God's abandonment of them. The picture of the surprise of the wicked in the Day of Judgment, in the Wisdom of Solomon, is a comment on the prophet; 'Then shall the righteous man stand in great boldness before the face of such as have afflicted him, and made no account of his labours. When they see it they shall be troubled with terrible fear, and shall be amazed with the strangeness of his salvation, so far beyond all they looked for, and they, repenting and groaning for anguish of spirit, shall say within themselves, This was he whom we held sometimes in derision and a proverb of reproach. We fools counted his life madness, and his end to be without honour; now is he numbered among the children of God, and his lot is among the saints.'

MINOR PROPHETS, p. 617.

Hosea.

The word of the Lord that came unto Hosea the son of Beeri, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel.—HOSEA I. 1.

THE twelve prophets, at the head of whom Hosea has been placed, were called of old the lesser or minor prophets, by reason of the smaller compass of their prophecies; not as though their prophecies were less important than the four greater prophets. Hosea, at least, must have exercised the prophetic office longer than any; besides, he must have spoken as much and as often in the Name of God. The 'twelve' were the organs of important prophecy as to their own people, or foreign nations, or as to Him whom they looked for, our Lord. Yet God, who willed, that of the earlier prophets, who prophesied from the time of Samuel to Elisha, no prophecy should remain except the few words in the Book of Kings, willed also that little, in comparison, should be preserved of what these later prophets spake in His Name. Their writings altogether are not equal in compass to those of the one prophet, Isaiah. And so, like the twelve Apostles, they were

enrolled in one prophetic band. Their writings, both in the Jewish and Christian Church, have been counted as one book, and, like the Apostles, they were called 'the Twelve.'

The earliest of this band followed very closely upon the ministry of Elijah and Elisha. Elisha, in his parting words, foretold to Joash the three victories whereby he recovered from Syria the cities of Israel, which Hazael had taken from his father Jehoahaz. In the next reign, namely that of Jeroboam II., there arose the first of that brilliant constellation of prophets whose light gleamed over the fall of Israel and Judah, shone in their captivity, and set at last with the prediction of him who should precede the rising of the Sun of Righteousness.

The order of 'the twelve' was most probably an order of time. We know that the greater prophets are placed in that order, as also the three last of the twelve.

Hosea, the first of the twelve, must have prophesied during a period as long as the ordinary life of man; for his ministry must have lasted seventy years. A long and heavy service for a soul full of love like his, mitigated only by his hope of the Coming of Christ, the final conversion of his people, and the victory over the grave. But the length is nothing incredible, since, about this time, Jehoiada 'did good in Israel, both towards God and towards His house,' until he was 130 years. But if God called him quite young to his office, he need but have lived about 95 years; whereas Anna

the prophetess served God in the temple, with fasting and prayer, night and day, after a widowhood, probably, of 84 years; and S. John the Evangelist lived probably 104 years; and S. Polycarp became a martyr when he was about 104 years old, having served Christ 86 years, and having, when 95, sailed from Asia to Italy. Not then the length of Hosea's life, but his endurance, was superhuman; so long did God will that His prophets should toil; so little fruit were they content to leave behind them. For these few chapters alone remain of a labour beyond the ordinary life of man. But they were content to have God for their exceeding great reward.

The time during which Hosea prophesied was the darkest period in the history of the kingdom of Israel. Jeroboam II. was almost the last king who ruled in it by the appointment of God; the rest of Hosea's life was passed amid the decline of the kingdom of Israel. Politically, all was anarchy or misrule; kings made their way to the throne through the murder of their predecessors, and made way for their successors through their own. Each usurper seems to have strengthened himself by a foreign alliance; at least we find Baasha in league with Benhadad, king of Syria; Ahab marrying Jezebel, daughter of a king of Tyre and Zidon; Menahem giving Pul, the king of Assyria, tribute that he might confirm the kingdom in his hand; Pekah confederate with Rezin. These alliances brought with them the corruptions of the Phœnician and Syrian idolatry, wherein murder and lust became acts of religion. Jehu

also probably sent tribute to the king of Assyria, to secure to himself the throne which God had given him. The fact appears in the cuneiform inscriptions; it falls in with the character of Jehu and his half-belief, using all means, human or divine, to establish his own end. In one and the same spirit, he destroyed the Baal-worshippers as adherents of Ahab, retained the calf-worship, courted the ascetic Jonadab, son of Rechab; spoke of the death of Jehoram as the fulfilment of prophecy, and sought help from the king of Assyria.

These irreligions had the more deadly sway, because they were countenanced by the corrupt worship which Jeroboam I. had set up as the State religion over-against the worship at Jerusalem. To allow the people to go up to Jerusalem, as the centre of the worship of God, would have risked their owning the line of David as the kings of God's appointment. To prevent this, Jeroboam set up a great system of rival worship. Himself a refugee in Egypt, he had there seen Nature (*i.e.* what are God's workings in nature) worshipped under the form of a calf. He adopted it in the words in which Aaron had been overborne to sanction it, as the worship of the One True God under a visible form: 'These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.' With great human subtlety he laid hold of Israel's love for idol-worship, and their reverence for their ancestors, and even words which Aaron had used, and sought to replace by this symbol of God's working, His actual presence over the mercy-seat. Around this

he gathered as much of the Mosaic ritual as he could. The priests and Levites remaining faithful to God, he made other priests not of the line of Aaron, then, while he gratified the love of idolatry, he decked it out with all the rest of the worship which God had appointed for Himself. He retained the feasts which God had appointed, the three great festivals, their solemn assemblies, the new moons and sabbaths; every kind of sacrifice was retained, the burnt-offering, the meat-offering, the drink-offering,—thank-offerings, peace-offerings, freewill-offerings, sin-offerings. They had hymns and instrumental music; they paid the tithes of the third year, probably they gave the first-fruits; they had priests and prophets, and temples; the temple of Bethel was the king's chapel, the temple of the state; the worship was maintained by the civil authority. But all this outward show was rotten at the core. God had forbidden man so to worship Him, nor was it He who was worshipped at Bethel and Dan, though Jeroboam probably meant it. People, when they alter God's truth, alter more than they think for. Such is the lot of all heresy. Jeroboam probably meant that God should be worshipped under a symbol, and he brought in a worship which was not, in truth, a worship of God at all. The calf was the symbol, not of the personal God, but of ever-renewed life, His continual vivifying of all which lives, and renewing of what decays. And so what was worshipped was not God, but much what men now call 'Nature.' The calf was a symbol of 'Nature,' much as men say, 'Nature does this

or that,' 'Nature makes man so and so,' 'Nature uses simplicity of means,' 'Nature provides,' etc.; as if Nature were a sort of semi-deity, or creation was its own creator. As men now profess to own God, and do own Him in the abstract, but talk of 'Nature' till they forget Him, so Jeroboam, who was a shrewd, practical, irreligious man, slipped into a worship of Nature, while he thought, doubtless, he was doing honour to the Creator, and professing a belief in Him.

But they were those same workings in creation which were worshipped by the neighbouring heathen, in Baal and Ashtaroth, only there the name of the Creator was altogether dropped. . . . Calf-worship paved the way for those coarser and more cruel worships of nature under the names of Baal and Ashtaroth, with all their abominations of consecrated child-sacrifices and degrading or horrible sensuality. The worship of the calves led to sin. The heathen festival was one of unbridled licentiousness. The account of the calf-festival in the wilderness agrees too well with the heathen descriptions. The very least which can be inferred from the words, 'Aaron had made them naked for their shame before their enemies,' is an extreme relaxedness, on the borders of further sin.

And now, in Hosea's time, these idolatries had yielded their full bitter fruit. The course of iniquity had been run. The stream had become darker and darker in its downward flow. Every commandment of God was broken, and that habitually. All was falsehood,

adultery, blood-shedding. . . . Those who were first in rank were first in excess. People and king vied in debauchery, and the sottish king joined and encouraged the freethinkers and blasphemers of his court. Corruption had spread throughout the whole land; even the places once sacred through God's revelations of other mercies to their forefathers, Bethel, Gilgal, Gilead, Mizpah, Shechem, were special scenes of corruption or of sin. Every holy memory was effaced by present corruption; could things be worse? There was one aggravation more. Remonstrance was useless; the knowledge of God was wilfully rejected; the people hated rebuke; the more they were called, the more they refused; they forbade their prophets to prophesy, and their false prophets hated God greatly. All attempts to heal all this disease only showed its incurableness.

Such was the condition of the people among whom Hosea had to prophesy some seventy years. They themselves were not sensible of their decay, moral or political. They set themselves, in spite of the prophet's warning, to prop up their strength by aid of the two heathen nations, Egypt and Assyria. In Assyria they chiefly trusted, and Assyria they had to denounce to them, should carry them captive; stragglers at least from them fled to Egypt, and in Egypt they should be a derision, and should find their grave. This captivity he had to foretell as imminent, certain, and irreversible. God tells them absolutely, 'I will cause the kingdom of the house of Israel to cease;' 'I will no more have mercy

upon the house of Israel,' 'they shall be wanderers among the nations,' 'they shall not dwell in the Lord's land.' 'Israel is swallowed up; she shall be among the nations like a vessel in which is no pleasure.'

Again, God contrasts with this His sentence on Israel, His future dealings with Judah and His mercies to her, of which Israel should not partake, while of Judah's spiritual mercies He says that Israel should partake by being united with Judah.

The ground of this difference was, that Israel's separate existence was bound up with the sin of Jeroboam, which clave to them throughout their history, and which none of their least bad kings ventured to give up. God tried them for two centuries and a half, and not one king was found who would risk his throne for God. In merciful severity, then, the separate kingdom of Israel was to be destroyed, and the separate existence of the ten tribes was to be lost.

This message of woe gives a peculiar character to this prophecy of Hosea; he, like S. Paul, was of the people whose temporary excision he had to declare. He calls the wretched king of Israel, 'our king;' and God calls the rebellious people 'thy people;' of that people he was specially the prophet. Judah he mentions incidentally, but his main commission lay among the ten tribes. Like Elijah and Elisha, whom he succeeded, he was raised up out of them, for them. His love could not be tied down to them, and so he could not but warn Judah against sharing Israel's sin.

MINOR PROPHETS, p. 1.

Life the Preparation for Death.

It is appointed to all men once to die, but after this the judgment.—HEB. IX. 27.

WHY is there such awe in that brief word 'Death'? Why, if we could see along this church a long solemn funeral procession, in which those narrow dwelling-places wherein our bodies shall one day resolve into their dust, should pass before us, each, as they shall one day be, as in God's sight they are, inscribed with our several names, the number of our fleeting years, the year, month, day which closed them, why should we look each with an awed gaze upon our own? Whence is that cold pang which brave men have felt on the battle eve? Or why do crowds fly, like scared sheep, before a pestilence? Is it only the heathen thought that 'linquenda tellus et domus et placens uxor'? Or is it a shrinking from the bodily circumstances of death that 'this sensible warm motion shall become a kneaded clod'? Or is it that life and its prospects are so bright, the thought of self-development so grand, the pleasures of this life so dazzling, the joy of working among our fellow-men so satisfying, life itself so buoyant, that we

should long to have our allotted threescore years and ten measured out to us, or the ten years of toil and sorrow which fill out the fourscore years? Life is joyous, because it flows from God, the Source of life. Duty, well fulfilled, sheds peace on the soul, for it places us so far in harmony with God; pure love engoldens life, because love is the created image of the Being of God, who is Love, a ray from the essential bliss of God. But if we knew that we were to pass from joy to joy, that life was only to flow over the barrier which bounds our vision, then to glide on more brilliant and heaven-lit than before, who would not exchange this dying life for the land of the living? It is not the mere loss of this life or its joys which gives that start of fear. Loss we may grieve over; it may make our sun go down at noon-day; it does not give that piercing shock of personal fear. The poet truly said, 'Conscience does make cowards of us all!' For the apostle said, 'The sting of death is sin;' hence was it that a brave man, sent on a forlorn hope, turned back to meet a disgraced death. Death confronted him; one deadly unrepented sin flashed on his mind; he dared meet death; he dared not meet an unreconciled God.

Why did the sight of the decayed remains of his pious and beautiful queen so affect the young Duke of Gandia (S. Francis Borgia), that, for his thirty-three remaining years, he never forgot that sight, and at once died to the world that at his death he might live to God? Why did that hair-cloth beneath the dress of

the just-departed wife of Italy's dearest hymn-writer (Jacoponi da Todi) so move his soul, that he thenceforth renounced the world, whose pomps he loved, and lived to be counted a fool for the love of Christ? Why, in our own days, did that chance glance at the morning dress laid aside for dinner, awakening the thought of our laying aside this our mortal frame, change in an instant the whole current of the life of a noble convert, while yet young, and make him give his life, his all, to God? (This history is printed, not published.)

What gives to death this solemn aspect? The answer is simple. We can die but once. Every error, negligence, ignorance, sin, can be, in some sort, undone. Our dear Lord prayed for His executioners; the guilt of the Crucifixion of the Son of God, the Redeemer, could be undone. His blood was shed for those who shed it; nay, it overflowed to be the source, not of cleansing only, or of healing, but of living union with Himself. 'The blood which in their frenzy they shed, believing, they drank,' says S. Augustine so often. But if we fail in death, it cannot be repaired. All of life is summed up there. Men fall, rise, relapse, recover, relapse again, and are again restored by the grace of God in life. But what in death? 'As the tree falleth, so it shall be.' It may have inclined this way or that; the breath of God's good Spirit, the impulse of His inspirations, the soft violence of His grace, the strong blows of His merciful visitations, seemed to impel it one way; inured habit bowed it

the other; it fell, it cannot rise. Where it falleth, there it shall lie. 'It is appointed unto all men once to die,' and after that—what, a second trial? A second plank after shipwreck? A fresh use of all the experience gained in life? However any may act, you know God saith none of these things, but 'It is appointed unto all men once to die, and after that the judgment.'

But because death is an act so alone, so single, so distinct and separate in its nature and its issue from all besides in life, does it therefore stand insulated? If one were to judge from the ways and words of mankind, it must surely be so. It is the one thing in this life which is absolutely certain. How long we shall abide here, what shall befall us to-morrow, in what way we shall pass out of this life, early, late, sudden, slow, with ease or pain, we can form no guess. The green leaf is rent off, while the sere yellow leaf, ready to drop of itself, remains. 'With forethought,' said the heathen poet, 'does God whelm with a murky night the issue of the future.'

Every other trial we may escape, this, this alone, is certain. All depends on it. Eternity hangs upon the moment of death,—eternal bliss, eternal woe. And yet, who prepares for it? Were it any trial in this life, on which the provision for our future depended, what care would men take! Were it an examination in this place, which should give you good credentials in this life, every right means is used, every nerve is strained.

And yet the judgment of after-life often reverses this judgment as to its outset. The loss may be repaired. But where the judgment is final, irreversible, irreparable; where the stake is infinite, endless; the bliss known to God alone, who is the Bliss and Joy of His own; the loss unendurable, who wellnigh prepares, who thinks of it? The thought is an unwelcome guest, to whom men refuse entrance, if they can; if they cannot, they are fertile in excuses for dismissing him. One thing alone they never say, 'Come again to-morrow.' They would fain never think of him, till he comes to carry them to judgment. We know that we must die. Why embitter life with the thought of it?

And yet how should it be that everything of moment in this life, which has to be done well, is to be studied, and that the weightiest act of all should need no study, no preparation? Is there no science of dying well? no '*disce mori*'? Has our merciful Father destined all our whole race to pass through this awful, irreparable ordeal, and shod our feet with no preparation whereby we may tread unharmed on its bars of fiery iron? Does He guide us, step by step, through this life's wilderness, when our bodies are unworn, our minds in full vigour; and does He leave that last act severed from all before—when the body is enfeebled by age, disease, approaching dissolution, and the soul distracted by pain, worn by sleeplessness, wearied by the weariness of its poor brother, the body, with which it is so mysteriously united, from which it is now about to be

rent away,—does He leave us to enter upon that last decisive act with no preparation, no forearming, to seek for His grace, pardon, assisting strength, in what way we best can, aided by such prayers of the priests, or of our sorrowing friends, as we can get, and fortified by His Sacrament?

To judge from men's ways, one should think that such was their belief. What else means this picture of deathbed repentance, which so many have in their minds, as though a man might live through this life without God, and then, by one act at its close, sever himself from all its past, and live with God for all eternity?

How comes the name 'deathbed repentance' to be so familiar to us as to have become a sort of proverb? True, that the very possibility that there should be no deathbed is awful enough. What of those hundreds whom one explosion in a mine sent into eternity with just that moment's notice of the coming sound? what if, when the men of a whole village were, last year, so cut off at once, one man in that whole village had continued in sin, calculating on a deathbed repentance? Souls pass into eternity every day, 'cut off even in the blossom of their sin,' without one moment, seemingly, to say one 'Lord have mercy.' I do not mean that there are not death repentances. God has placed no limit to the wonderfulness, the unaccountableness of His mercies. His mercy outruns, overpowers, overmasters His justice; and I heartily believe that He would not

part, if He could, with one soul whom He hath made. Doubtless, the hour of death is an hour when God is very busy with the soul, because it is its last. When the tongue can give no utterance of its hope in Jesus; when we have ceased to pray with it, as thinking it insensible; when human means are passed; when, perhaps, even friends have ceased to pray for it, as believing it to be gone; still often, while it yet lingers, God is pleading with it, and works in it what the Judgment Day alone will reveal.

Life, then, whether it will it or will it not, is a preparation for our death. Ceaselessly, noiselessly, swiftly, smoothly flows on and on and on the stream of time; it gathers strength with our weakness; slow, perhaps, in our early wondering years, rapid beyond all measure as less and less remains to us; yet charged with every sin and folly which stained its earlier course, and 'darker as it downwards bears,' unless its foulness have been cleansed by penitence and the Blood of Jesus. Of itself, every day is the parent of the morrow. As day to day carries on the wondrous tale of the loving-kindness of God, so day transmits to day the gathering, deepening sum of human sin. God gives grace on grace. The grace of God, well used, is the pledge of enlarged grace. Man adds sin to sin; the sin of to-day is the preparation and earnest of to-morrow's sin, and that of to-morrow's and to-morrow's and to-morrow's, till that last day which knows no to-morrow save eternity. To-day's evil speaking of another insures to-morrow's;

to-day's oath, or bad conversation, or freedom with Holy Scripture, or irreverent jest, or negligence in prayer, or forgetfulness of self-examination, or sloth, which leaves no time for the morning's prayer, or en grossment in the evening's occupation, which leaves the soul too dead-tired for the evening's, or slovenly preparation for Holy Communion, or still more slovenly thanksgiving after it, are so many moral earnests that the same will be on the morrow, or on the next occasion. Much more will this week's deadly sin, but for some mighty interposition of God's grace, be the forerunner and forthbringer of the next week's or next month's deadly sin. . . .

Look back to past years. The act of the child became the habit of the man. Why should not the habit of youth be that of middle age, and the wont of middle age be the inured custom of advanced age, and the inured custom of advanced age be the necessity of old age (if you ever see it), and, wherever death should find you, the habit of that age be the ruling thought in death?

Life, will we nill we, is the preparation for death. We live but to die. Our death is not the end only, it is the object of our life. Our journey's end, not the journey itself, is that journey's object. It is this we have in view; this relieves its weariness, its monotony, its irksomeness. It was for this that God sent us into the world; it is to this end that He has been guiding us by all the varieties of His Providence; for this it is that

He has provided us with all the richness and prodigality of His grace ; it is for this that He has invented all the fertility of His resources to save us. For death knits in one our time and our eternity. Time and eternity meet in that one point. As we are in that last moment of time, such are we throughout eternity.

Death has a great work for grace to do in itself without weighting it with a work not its own. It is a startling prayer which the Church puts into our mouths by the graves of those we love, winding up its appeal for God's mercy in the solemn cadence : 'O Holy and Merciful Saviour, Thou most worthy Judge Eternal, suffer us not, at our last hour, for any pains of death, to fall from Thee.' We should not have framed this prayer ourselves. Yet those who framed it had had before their eyes death and the trials incidental to death.

Every sort of death hath its own trials. Death with sharp pain, lest it break endurance ; death with lingering pains, lest it wear out patience. Then the Evil One has studied our characters all our life long, and applies the knowledge, with all his accumulated experience of ourselves, our weak points whereby we most easily fall, and of others' death-beds, and his supernatural skill against us. It has become a sort of proverb, 'The ruling passion strong in death.' This, too, must come from large experience.

Such as we are in life, such we shall almost surely be in death ; and what we are in death, such we shall

certainly be in all eternity. What remains but that we make all our life a preparation for eternity?

Heathen wisdom saw a gleam of this. 'Who closes best his last day?' one was asked. 'He who ever set before him that the last day of life was imminent.' Not without inspiration of God was that counsel, 'In all thy works remember thy last end, and thou shalt never do amiss' (Ecclus. vii. 36).

It was a good old-fashioned practice, morning by morning, to think of the last four things—death, judgment, heaven, hell,—and to pray to live that day as one would have wished to have lived when the last day came. We cannot imagine to ourselves that any given day will be our last. It was said (by Cicero) of old, 'No one is so old as not to think that he shall live yet one year more.' Vitality is strong within us, and it would be unreal to try to make this a motive for action. So, as to lying down in one's bed as though one should not wake. The human mind gets accustomed to the thought, and may easily enact it unreally. But though, humanly speaking, our anticipations are true; although the cases of sudden death are rare, compared with the multitude of those who do not die suddenly; although God mercifully, for the most part, gives us intimations of our death, yet every day is a part of our death, and enters into it. For death, which sums up all, gathers into one the results of each of our days, and each day as we live, well or ill, through the grace of God or our own fault, is the earnest of many like days

beyond. It is a stern nakedness of truth, stern only because it is so true; 'He is not worthy to be called a Christian who lives in that state wherein he would fear to die.' For nothing makes death fearful except the fear of all fears,—lest we be separate from Christ.

To-day is ever 'the day of salvation.' Thou art more in thine own power now than thou wouldest be to-morrow. God appeals to you anew, 'I have set before you life and death. Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby you have transgressed, and make you a new heart and a new spirit. For why will you die? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God: wherefore turn and live ye.'

Turn, and the death of Jesus shall be your life, for He died that we might live; He died to redeem our forfeited life, to hallow our regenerate life, to live in us; to be our life; to be our victory in death. Turn to Him. Look up to His bleeding Hands, His thorn-crowned sacred Head, His meek Eye of Love. Thank Him, bless Him; fear for yourself while you bless Him, and bless Him while you fear. He will make a holy, reverent awe sweeter than all earthly joy; He will be thy strength in life, thy fearlessness in death, thy joy in eternity. So shall we ever be with the Lord, evermore thanking and blessing Him, and, of His personal mercies to us, most, perhaps, for that first prevailing thought of reverent fear, 'Am I fit to meet Jesus thus?'

Seek God first, and ye shall have all.

Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.—S. MATT. VI. 33.

HAPPINESS, my brethren, ye all seek after: may ye obtain it. Our Lord from heaven preaches unto you how you may obtain it: 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.' All seek happiness; but, since the fall, all, until they are restored by faith in God, seek it in a wrong way. The very character of the fall was to seek out of God what was only to be found from God, in God. . . .

This, then, is the one deep original disease of man entailed by the fall; the one evil source of all his manifold sins, which our Lord came down to heal. The only bliss of the creature is to desire what God wills, as He wills it. The one sickness of the human race is to desire what *it* wills, and compass it as *it* wills it. One end God proposes to man, and man to himself,—to be happy. Our Lord began His ministry with a ninefold 'Blessed are ye.' The one search of the wise of old

was, Wherein was happiness? What every sinner seeks is a sort of solace to his misery. The passionate vents his passion, because it is a relief to him; men steal, to relieve some need they have, or think they have, or because they think it will be a good to them; covetousness, ambition, pleasure, vanity, thirst for praise, love of dress, the highest intellectual thirst for fame, or the lowest pleasure of the flesh, or the poorest act of self-will, each has this one end, that the soul hopes to find some momentary contentment in it. This is the character of all unbelief, to seek its own happiness, not from God. The way of all faith is to seek God's ways, and its own happiness in them. All unbelief seeks some present gain, to incur incomparable, boundless woe after. All faith undergoes some present loss, for future, incomparable, infinite bliss. But Satan, being 'a liar from the beginning,' fails in his word, and sin has misery in this life as well as in that which is to come; God keepeth His, and by the foretaste of everlasting joy, oh, how much more than compensates all which is now resigned for His sake: and what in those good things which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard! Nay, even here, trials are mostly for a short season: God soon, if not in the very act, replaces by His consolations what is sacrificed for His sake; He sprinkles immediately (if not in the very act, as soon as it is over) a healthful bitterness on the short-lived pleasures of sin. Sin is pleasant in the mouth; when swallowed, it is bitter. Self-denial, for Christ's sake, has mostly sweet-

ness, as soon as any one has, with a whole heart, embraced it.

Little indeed were it, if, for that unutterable bliss, we had here to undergo any suffering. What were ten thousand deaths compared to endless life and joy in God? What says he who was 'in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure,' and, above belief, 'in deaths often, in weariness and painfulness; in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness'? What thought he? What is the one voice of the glorious company of the apostles spoken by him? 'I will glory in the things which concern mine infirmities.' For these were the livery of his apostolate, the badges of his Master, the marks of the Lord Jesus, the power of His grace, His strength made perfect in weakness, His life sustaining in death. These he bound around him as a diadem; these light afflictions were as wings to heaven; dishonour was honour; to be held as deceivers by man was to be true to God; to be unknown was to be well known to God (as He said, 'I know thee by name'); to die daily was to live daily by the life of Christ; outward sorrow was inward joy; poverty was the riches of Christ, whereof he was a steward, and whereby he made many rich; to have nothing in the world was to possess all things. For it was to have God for his portion, Who hath all things, and is all things, and instead of all things; Food, yea, the Bread of Life and the Living Vine; and the Well of Water springing up unto everlasting life, whereof

he who drinketh shall never thirst; and the True Riches, and Glory, and Peace, and Honour, and Immortality, and Robe of Righteousness, and Endless Love and Bliss.

'Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.' O blessed choice, O easy purchase and condescending goodness of our God! He does not bid you *not* seek what you would have; He only bids us seek first—what? Himself. 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God.'

This choice, repeated ten thousand times ten thousandfold, is the one history of man. First or last! If God is not first, He is last. To choose anything with God is to set up an idol *with Him*, and He hath said, 'Thou shalt have none other gods but Me,' as He has said of the Day of Judgment, 'I will cut off them that worship and swear to the Lord, and that swear by Malcham;' *i.e.* those who in words give themselves to God, but join any created thing to worship with Him. To choose anything wilfully which God wills not is to dethrone God, and set up an idol in His stead; what is any one's *god* but that from which he seeks his *good?* It seems to us strange when Darius forbade any prayer to be made for thirty days save to himself. But what else do they who hang upon the favour of men, find their happiness in their praise, do wrong things to please them, or for fear of them, or omit what is right in God's sight,—what do they but make man their god, and, so far, fall under the curse of God? 'Cursed be

the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and in his heart departeth from the Lord.' We think it strange that men should have fallen down before stocks and stones, have worshipped images made like unto corruptible man and four-footed beasts, and creeping things. If a man covet—'covetousness,' saith Holy Scripture, 'is idolatry.' Whatsoever a man desireth out of God, apart from God, that is his god. If a man heap up luxuries to himself, and his soul takes rest therein, they are his good, that is, his god. If a man toil all his life long with one end in view, to make himself a name, to raise his family in the world, to manage others and have his own way, to be looked up to in his neighbourhood, to be admired, to be accounted clever,—how were those senseless idolaters who set up Dagon in his place again, and vowed themselves anew before him, when he had fallen upon his face to the earth before the ark of the Lord, and yielded, as it were, an unwilling obeisance to God,—how were these, when they anew worshipped their broken idol, more stupid idolaters than those who vow again and again before the idols which men set up in this world, whom God hath so often broken them in pieces, and shown that from their worship there cometh only bitterness and grief and shame?

'Seek,' our Lord saith, 'first,'—not leave to chance, not with a hesitating, divided will, not again, 'forget not wholly,' or give to the things of God a careless thought, now and then, once in a week, or at morning and

evening, while your hearts are set upon the pleasures and cares and vanities and riches of this world; but 'seek,' as men who desire to find, and ye shall find God; find Him, having been found by Him; find Him so as never to lose Him; 'and all these things shall be added unto you.'

And hath He not kept His word? Who are the great and the noble, and the princes of this world, whom we of this day count our benefactors? Are they those who sought the things of this world, or they who forewent them? Where are the giants which were before the flood, the mighty men of old, men of renown? What is known of them, save that they filled the earth with violence, ate and drank, and the flood swept them all away? And who in that generation remains, had in reverence in all the earth, but he 'who was a just man, and perfect in his generations, and walked with God,' yet was doubtless the laughing-stock of the world which then was, while he builded the ark to the saving of his house? Where is he who, after the flood, became a 'mighty one on the earth,' but a rebel against his God? The very stars are grouped by man after his form, but himself is held as a curse. (The very name of 'Nimrod' is derived from 'rebellion.' Holy Scripture says that 'Babel, built in rebellion, was the beginning of his kingdom.' 'The Persians say that Nimrod, the founder of Babylon, was deified, and was placed among the stars as Orion.') What became of those who said, 'Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may

reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad on the face of the whole earth'? What, but that they brought upon them what they feared? 'The Lord scattered them abroad from *thence*,' from the very place of their might, 'upon the face of all the earth.' And who of those times is loved and reverenced yet, not among Christians and Jews only, but among those alien to the faith, as 'the friend of God,' who but that lonely wanderer, an outcast from his home, who left his country and his kindred, and his father's house, and went out, not knowing whither he went, only that he followed the call of God? What remains of all the wisdom of the Egyptians, or the might of Pharaoh? The sea covered them; they sank as a stone in the mighty waters. And he who 'esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt,' became a 'God to Pharaoh,' to stand in the place of God towards him? Of what avail was the beauty and popularity of Absalom, or the huge might of Goliath, or the cruel policy of Joab, or the armies of Sennacherib, or the revelries of Belshazzar? They were their destruction. What of Jeroboam's crooked, ungodly policy, to make sure in his own way what God by His prophet Ahijah had promised him? It became sin to the house of Jeroboam, even to cut it off, and to destroy it from the face of the earth. Where the pomp and eloquence of Herod, when they said, 'It is the voice of a god, and not of a man!' 'He was eaten of worms, and died.' Where is Ahab, and the

ivory house which he made? The dogs licked up his blood by the pool of Samaria. And where is he whom Ahab counted for his enemy, and fled for his life from Jezebel, who hid himself by a brook, and was fed by ravens, and was sought for in all kingdoms and nations, that he might be slain; who stood alone, a prophet of the Lord, on Mount Carmel, against 450 prophets of Baal, against whom a king sent captains and their fifties; with raiment of hair-cloth, and a leathern girdle about his loins? Where is he? We only know that he is for half the time that the world has been alive in the secret presence of his God, that he came forth thence in glory at the Transfiguration of our Lord, and spake with Him, and shall still, it is thought, come at the end of the world, 'to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers.' How does the prophet Daniel tell of the might of empires, before whom none could stand, none deliver out of their hands, conquerors, who passed over the whole earth and touched not the ground, swift as the wind? And where are they? or what trace is there of their power? The wind sweeps over their palaces, and 'their place knoweth them no more.' Of their power, it says, as of all human might, 'When he was strong, then he was broken' (Dan. viii. 8). How, in the apostles, do we hear of far other might, the might of obedience, the might of 'seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness,' the might of weakness, of poverty, of contempt, of endurance, of

death, not inflicted but undergone? What speed of conquerors like theirs, whose sound went out into all lands, and their words unto the ends of the world? What might like theirs, before whom the gods of the heathen gave way, yea, those worse idols which men set up in their own hearts, their dark and foul and lewd sins, which melted like wax at the fire, which Christ gave them to kindle, and were burnt up like stubble by the spirit of fire which glowed in them? what rule like theirs, who, 'having been with Jesus in His tribulations,' shall sit, He saith, on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel; yea, S. Paul saith, shall judge Angels, whom He hath made princes in all lands, ruling and ordering their lives through His word, which He spake through them! They sought 'first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and the holy Church throughout the world, as century after century it obeys the faith of Christ, is the Kingdom which they, through the might of our Lord, won to our Lord.

But these, you will say, through suffering! How, then, were 'these things' added unto them, which for His sake they despised! If thou promisedst to a man some small coin for his labour, and instead thereof gave him, to the full contentment of his heart, broad lands and goodly houses, wouldst thou not have more than kept thy word? Even so, God withdraws no portion of the earthly reward, except to compensate it more abundantly with heavenly joys even on this earth. To those of

tender strength He giveth milk; when full-grown, thou deemest it no hardship that thou hast strong meat instead. Even so, God addeth these things over and above to those who desire them, first desiring Him more. What could any have in this world more than S. Paul, to be 'alway rejoicing'? What, in the whole world, were like to this, that, as the sufferings of Christ abounded in him, so his consolation also abounded through Christ? Sufferings, which Christ accounted as His own, sufferings, which He suffered, and bore in them and for them! This was in itself an intensity of joy. But then, with them, over and above, there was an abundance of consolation, swelling like a tide, and mounting over and overwhelming the abundance of suffering; and these consolations poured into the soul and overflowing from the hand of our Lord Jesus Christ Himself. As then, the manna, one in itself, suited every one's taste, so to all who 'seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness,' He giveth what He sees each to need. To those who in the sweat of their brow gain their bread, but seek Him first, He gives what they need for the body, and in soul, sweetness of contentment, and joy in Him, and calmness of hope, and unfailing trust, and inward consolations; and these mount, even as what ye forego for Him, mounteth also; and to those who for His Name's sake and the Gospel's, forsake houses, or brethren or sisters, or father or mother, or wife or children, or lands, 'an hundredfold, now in this same time, with persecutions,' making the persecutions them-

selves, through His own presence with them, a portion of their reward.

Truly, 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, for their works do follow them,' winning for them their Redeemer's praise, by whose grace they wrought them. And yet their fruits remain with us. Dynasties have passed away; human greatness decays; lands and manors change their owners; families cease to be; 'all flesh is as grass, and all the goodliness thereof as the flower of the field; the grass withereth, the flower fadeth;' and what abideth? 'The word of our God shall abide for ever!' Nation after nation of old time swept over this land; the ark of God rose again, and 'went upon the face of the waters.' In this ancient city (Bristol) there are few traces of the former greatness of this world; its oldest civil monument, once the human defence of this ancient city, remains but as a boundary-wall, or as a shed for horses. Its glory is, that it still is in part, what it was called of old, the city of churches. The churches reared to the honour of God, the true defence of cities and of people, remain the emblems of their immortality in His presence, to whom, and by whose grace, they built them. They who reared them, 'sought first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness,' and their reward is with their God.

SINGLE SERMON.

God calleth thee.

And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle? They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive.—S. Matt. xx. 6, 7.

If we would hear, surely we might rather say that God calls us at all times, in all places, by all things, persons, deeds, words, by night and by day, all our lives long, than dare to say for ourselves, before God's all-searching eye, 'No man hath hired us.' For so it is, when men have heard the first call, everything calls them. When the heart is awake, every, the lowest, whisper calls it. When it is alive to God, every work of God, every gift of God, every grace of God, in it or in others, everything done for or against God, every forgetfulness of God, every coarse or idle word it hears, every hard or thoughtless look it sees, calls it again to God. For, when that one thought, 'Heaven or hell for ever'—for ever the Blissful Presence, or the loss of the Face of God, everlasting love or everlasting hate,—is, by God's Holy Spirit, wrought into the soul, everything may bring it back and forth in us; everything of

sense or spirit may call us out of and above this world of sense up to its Maker, the Father of all spirits and all flesh, our God.

The world is one great mirror. As we are who look into it or on it, so is it to us. It gives us back ourselves. It speaks to us the language of our own hearts. Such as we are, so doth it speak to us, of pleasure, gain, honour, vanity, worldly happiness, or of everlasting rest and peace, out of itself, in God. Our inmost self is the key to all. Our ruling thought or passion, the thought or love, that is, which has the mastery over us, and governs us, and occupies our soul, is touched by everything around us. In grief, all things alike, the most oyful or the most sorrowful, suggest to the mourner thoughts of grief; yea, joyous sights and sounds speak mostly, most heavily to it of its own heaviness, or of the absence of the lost object of *its* love. Self-love sees everything as it bears on self; love of pleasure and of gain looks on all as it may minister to its pleasure or gain, or to envy those who have what it has not. The heart where God dwells is by everything called anew to God; His Blessed Presence draws it by its sweetness; or His seeming absence may, by the very void, absorb it yet more, by the very vehemence of longing, into Himself.

It matters not what things are, things like or things unlike, things divine or things devilish; the obedience, growth, harmony, beauty of nature, or the disobedience, disorder, decay, discord of man, and the loathsomeness

of sin. Sounds of harmony which echo, as it were, the choirs of heaven, or sounds of discord, hatred, blasphemy, bad words uttered by the tongue, which 'is set on fire by hell;' things good, by their loveliness, or things bad by their dreadfulness, draw the soul upward to God, or drive it onward lest, like them, it lose Him.

Everything preaches eternity to the awakened soul. All love of gain it sees preaches of Him, the True Riches; all disquiet 'about many things' speaks of Him, our only Rest; all seeking after pleasure tells us of Him, the ever-flowing Torrent of Pleasure; all sickness of soul and body turns us to Him, our soul's only Health; all things passing lead to Him Who alone abideth. Perhaps no place may preach more to the soul the vanity of all things beneath the sun, and the verity of Him, the eternal verity, Whose and of Whom are all things, as the vast solitude of this great, crowded, tumultuous city of London, 'full of stirs' (Isa. xxii. 2), where 'all things are full of labour; man cannot utter it; the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing,' where wellnigh all countenances or motions are full of eagerness, anxiety; all are bent on something, seeking, but finding not, because they are seeking all things out of God, all but Himself, except when, here and there, they at last become very emptiness, because they know no more what to seek or find, but have lost themselves.

But, chiefly, we know in our inmost selves, that whether we have obeyed the call first or last, or

if any are yet disobeying it or hearing it listlessly, obeying it for a while in solemn seasons, and then forgetting it, or thinking they obey it when untempted, and then anon, when the temptation comes, ever anew disobeying, we know that we have been called manifoldly, perhaps our whole lives through. All, perhaps, can recollect when, in their childhood, some sermon or deep Scripture words touched them, or some grave look or word of parents; or they felt ill at ease, or their soul yearned for something better than this world's poor fleeting vanities; or they felt *that* within them not made for this world, which could not 'rest in it, but soared up' and up, as though it would find Him from Whom it came, Whose it is; or they were affrighted in themselves at thoughts of judgment, or they were inwardly bidden not to put off turning to God with their whole heart. God adapts His call to each several soul. He calleth gently or in awe, in love or in some form of displeasure. Quickening or checking us, within or without, directly or indirectly, in the secret chambers of the heart, or, 'in the chief place of concourse.'

If we have held back aforetime, let us not hold back now; if we have stood still now, 'run we so that we may obtain.' If we have for ten, twenty, thirty, forty, years, yea, to the very eleventh hour, 'stood all the day idle,' go we now at last into His vineyard. If any have even left His vineyard, having been called to it, yet now, at last, in the Name of God and in His Grace and

strength, return. He could make even the last first. No degrees of acceptance are closed by any degree of past forgetfulness, if thou labour now. We cannot undo the past, but God can and will efface it. We cannot recover our lost hours wherein we stood idle, but God can crowd into this last hour, in His will and good pleasure, the duties of a whole life. If we turn with our whole hearts, He can make us equal to those who have 'borne the burthen and heat of the day.' God, who calleth us, Himself giveth us the strength to obey His call. Life is short, the way long. Yet He Himself, who calleth us to strike more and more into the narrow way, will be Himself the Way to us. All Abraham's giant faith and obedience lay in that first call. All S. Paul's good course, and the life of Christ within him, lay in those first words, 'Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?' All eternity of bliss and the love of God will, through His grace, forecoming, accompanying, following, lie 'in one strong,' earnest, undivided giving of thy whole self to God, to do in thee, through thee, with thee, His gracious, loving will. For He who 'loved His own, loveth them unto the end.'

SINGLE SERMON.

The Danger of Riches.

Jesus said, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.—S. Luke xviii. 24, 25.

How is it that we can hear these words and some of us not have a pang about them? Is it that the love of wealth is so insatiable that none can think that *they* are rich, because others are richer? Or since, when riches increase, they are increased that eat them, and as the supply increases, the self-made want increases too, so that the rich feel often as though they were poor? Yet some of us, at times, must have had misgivings about them; some few, perhaps, have really set ourselves to act upon them; most, it is to be feared, have taken up with some easy meaning by which, while they allowed themselves to have, use, increase, lay by their wealth, they persuaded themselves that the words did not belong to them. They will say that the words belong to the first preaching of the Gospel when the Christians were persecuted, and they who followed Christ must give up all and hate their own lives also,—that now, by God's mercy, we

live in quiet times, in which Christ may be served with no great sacrifices ; that we are not called upon to do the like, but only to be ready, if we were. Or they will say that in S. Mark's Gospel our Lord explains His words when he adds, 'How hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!' and so the words relate not to those who *have* riches, but to those who *trust* in them. Anyhow, then, the rich are in no danger now, nay, rather to be envied ; the woe on riches and the blessing on poverty have passed away ; now, without fear, we may have our good things in this life ; there is no peril lest, having our treasure here, our hearts should be here also, or, being fixed on earth, we should lose heaven. And yet, as the words were used, they sounded anew as real words ; they were said over one who was very nigh to the kingdom of heaven, who was free from the sins by which so many of us fall ; in whom there was so much to love, since of him it is said, as of so few, 'Jesus beholding him, loved him.' We felt that they were heavy words, felt that they belonged not to the poor, felt (as we often may of words sadly explained away) that they might have a meaning for us.

True indeed it is, that the early Christians had to maintain their faith amid outward trials the most intense, which flesh and blood could not have endured, had not He, in whose name they suffered, Himself sustained them, and endured for them what they for Him endured. He who sent them forth in the unequal

conflict against Satanic rage clothed them with Divine might. They could not be conquered in whom, suffering for Christ, Christ suffered. How then, again, might this, their very suffering, scare our ease? Is, then, the warfare over? Is Satan's malice chained? His nature changed? His implacable hate against God and His saints abated? His restless, deadly hatred against those who are to occupy the seat in glory, whence he fell, extinguished? Or, since this cannot be so, is his mode of warfare only changed? And would he now, by a more dreadful cunning, feign himself at rest, wrest nothing from us, use fraud instead of violence, leave or give to men all things fair, freely to enjoy; be our friend instead of our enemy, teach us that we have nothing to fear from him, mingling his poison secretly that we without fear, may taste and die? My brethren, if we are wise, rather may we in the awfulness of that deadly struggle know the present warfare which Satan wages for each human soul. Then, too, they who disciplined not themselves, whose life was not one continual preparation for the last conflict, fell. Yet how fell they? How often, after long enduring tortures, 'subdued' by their vehemence and by protracted rackings, they at last, having withstood much, perished, denying Him, their only hope. Could anything intensely realise the awfulness of our being, what more than that some who had suffered even extremities of tortures for Christ, should at last have denied Him, and be denied by Him? Could anything awaken men from their death-sleep of

security and ease, it were such glimpes into that fearful unseen world as this. Can this be a place to rest securely and walk at random, where chasms, such as these, open into the pit of hell?

We cannot thus tamper with our consciences, when the living words of our Judge stand out before us, thus heard only with the outward ear, but borne in upon our souls as His words who is the Truth. 'Jesus said.' Who said? The Eternal Word, the Unchangeable God, Whose word abideth for ever, and shall not pass away when heaven and earth shall pass, but shall abide to judge us at the last day. He said sorrowfully over the young man who went away sorrowfully from Him, his Life, 'How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!' And more than this, that what was impossible and against nature was easier than this; and finally, when His disciples, who had no share in this world, for they had left all and followed Him, stood in awe and amazed, He yet had no other consolation, than that it was indeed impossible with men, but with God all things, even things impossible, were possible. And can we then again persuade ourselves, that what He spake, and fenced in so solemnly, related to one time only,—that it has no meaning now, and when that generation passed away, so did His words? or because one Gospel records that He added, 'They who trust in riches,' that this first thrice-recorded warning, 'How hardly shall they that *have* riches enter into the kingdom of God!' had no meaning of its own, and that

by both He meant only certain gross cases, in which men made money their idol, and not rather that all the rich were in danger of trusting in riches? When our Lord has so solemnly laid down a truth, and adds thereto another truth, shall we treat this as wave passes over wave, and not rather seek in it some further meaning of His words, enlarging them, not effacing them? Our Lord, the Eternal Word and Wisdom, useth not these words in vain. It must be true that they who are rich shall at all times hardly enter into the kingdom of God, and this, because all rich are in great peril of trusting in riches. To trust in riches is the peril inseparable from having them; the shadow they ever cast, the disease which besets them, their very natural fruit; so that, so far from taking for granted, as men do, that if they are not conscious of having it, they have it not, they may more safely think that if they are not conscious of having uprooted it, they have it.

Rather, if one asked, What peril have riches? one might ask, What peril have they not? First, then, they are wholly contrary to the life of Christ and His passion. That cannot be the safe, the happy lot, which is in all things most opposite to His. He came not only to die and suffer for us, but to be Himself the way unto Himself. He is Himself the royal Way, the straight Way for our feet, wherein is no stumbling; the Way, by His example; as the truth, in His promises; the life, in His rewards; the Way whereby we should follow on, the Truth to whom we are to attain, the Life in whom to

abide; the nearer, then, in all things to His life, the surer must we be not to perish from the Way; the nearer unto His outward life, the nearer, if this be our choice, or if, not being ours, we, by conforming ourselves to the will of God, make it ours, may we hope to be to Himself; some shadow, we may hope, of His Cross, may reach unto us; some ray of His inward Life, who Himself is our life, may call upon us; and while we would mould ourselves in His outward form and condition, He will, we may hope, impress upon our souls some measure of His likeness; while we would choose His portion, we shall find Himself our portion; while we would stand upon His way, we should find Him join Himself, even if at first as one unknown, as the companion of ours to 'abide with us;' while we thus outwardly draw nigh to Him, He has said, 'I will draw nigh unto you.'

What, then, was His portion? 'He, being rich, for our sakes became poor.' He emptied Himself, in that He was by Nature equal with God, He emptied Himself of His majesty and Co-Eternal Glory, and took our shame. The Lord was found in fashion as a servant; the Creator was obedient to His creature; the Holy took the likeness of our flesh of sin. The Lord of Life died the sinner's death. 'This shall be a sign unto you,' it was said to the shepherds; 'ye shall find the Babe wrapped in swaddling-clothes, and lying in the manger.' By two tokens was the Divine Infant made known. To the wise men, His Divine Nature by the sign from

heaven, He, the Bright and Morning Star, was to them declared by His own light. A new-created star pointed out its Creator, and they fell down and worshipped. To the shepherds, the token of the birth of 'the Saviour, Christ the Lord,' was His lowliness and poverty; His throne, a manger; His majesty, helpless infancy; His royal apparel, the mean swaddling-clothes. O blessed poverty, which should give us the true riches! blessed helplessness, which is our might! blessed manger, which contains for us, which were as beasts that perish, the Bread of Life! blessed swaddling-bands, which bound up our wounds and knit up our weakness! blessed, Divine, All Holy Outcast, for whom there was no room in the inn, that we, outcast and homeless, might be restored to our Father's house, its many spacious, glorious, starry mansions! blessed Divine Humanity, which should make us sinners 'partakers of Thy Divine nature!' O blessed Lord, who out of Thy boundless love didst narrow Thyself to the substance of our flesh, to be cradled in a manger, wert born in our littleness, sorrows, cold, poverty, nakedness; didst live with no place to lay Thy Sacred Head, until Thou didst rest it bared of all upon Thy cross, Thy Sacred Body to rest in a stranger's grave! yet what speaketh He to us, my brethren?—'How long, ye sons of men, will ye love vanity,' and shall I, who alone have, and am the true Riches, choose poverty, and will ye, who bear my name, heap up riches? I be houseless, and ye 'build you wide houses and large chambers'? I be rejected, and ye seek

to be honoured for My gifts? I choose hardness, and ye ease? I dishonour and ye glory, 'delicate members of a thorn-crowned head,' looking to be co-heirs with Me in heaven, and cleaving to earth as your inheritance and place of abiding? 'Sons of men,' will ye not learn of Me, who being the Son of God, for your sakes became the Son of man?

Unlike Him, we must ever here lie; for we are sinners. He, alone, as Man, was Holy; we His creatures, He our God. But can it be safe not to be aiming, herein also to be less unlike, to choose that which in all its pomp and glory was brought before His eye as Man, to be wholly rejected by Him; to choose what He rejected, and shrink back from what He chose?

This, then, is the first all-containing peril of riches. They are, in themselves, contrary to the Cross of Christ. I speak not now of what they may be *made*. As we, being enemies, were, through the Cross, made friends, so may all things, evil and perilous in themselves, except sin, become our friends. The Cross of Christ changes all it touches. Death is life; sorrow, joy; suffering, pleasure; nay, what is most deeply perilous, *may*, by the grace of God, be the very instrument of salvation, and the channel of grace. Temptations may become the occasions of victory; Satan's harassings, give us trust in God; wretched thoughts, the penalty of sin, gain us deep hatred of sin; weakness, purchase for us true strength; past falls, goad us, through deep penitence and humility, to nobler aims and higher crowns;

the mammon of unrighteousness gains us God, the true Riches. Poisons, in the physician's hand, remedy sickness. In our Great Physician's hand all things work together for good to them that love God. Be we indeed borne of the wood of the cross, wind and wave, in His hand, shall but waft us onward more swiftly to the heavenly shore. The serpent bears in it the remedy to its own death-bite. But woe to him who struggleth with the storms of temptation, and Christ walketh not on the waters! Woe to him who putteth his hand on the hole of the asp, unless he be a 'child weaned' from the pleasures of sense and of the world, or 'taketh up the serpents' of evil suggestions, unless Christ have given him the power to shake them off into the fire of their own hell, or 'drink deadly things,' unless Christ be life within him that he be not hurt!

Our Lord, in that He says the rich 'shall hardly enter,' implies that they *may* 'enter the kingdom of God.' The Cross of Christ can make riches safe. They are perilous, not death; and their peril is, lest they lead men to refuse His Cross. Few take it up for themselves. All wish to come to Christ, for 'in His right hand are pleasures for evermore,' few to follow after Him; all would desire to attain to His resurrection, few wish to have the fellowship of His sufferings; all would reign with Him, few would suffer with Him. Such of us as are bearing His Cross mostly took it not up simply at His bidding, but in His mercy He laid it upon us in suffering, or sickness, or bereavement, or

heavy loss, or aching of the heart, or a burthened conscience, and He who gave it us gave us strength to bear on under it, yea, made it bear us, lightening our steps; gave it us as a staff to steady our feeble knees, in slippery places to stay us, in the deep waters to uphold us, sustain us in life's pilgrimage, and comfort us in the valley of the shadow of death. By bearing it patiently we learn to bear it readily; by bearing it readily we learn to love it; for we find it a tree of life to those who lay hold of it, and its fruit, if at first bitter to the taste, is sweet and joyous afterwards. But this is the great peril of the rich, that they can so fence themselves against the Cross, which almost all, until they know it, dread. The Cross finds us in desolation, and they, He says, 'have received their consolation.' It finds us in evil things, and they are surrounded by their good things; it comes in want, and they have abundance; in distress, and they are at ease; in sorrow, and they are ever tempted, even to deaden their sorrows in this world's miserable joys. Happy only in this, that He who chasteneth whom He loveth, sprinkles His own healthful bitterness over life's destructive sweetness, and by the very void and emptiness of vanity calls forth the unsatisfied soul no more to 'spend money on that which is not bread, nor its labour on that which satisfieth not.'

But if it be so hard for the rich to seek to bear the Cross, it must be hard for them truly to love Him who bore it. Love longeth to liken itself to that it loves.

It takes up its words; it hangs on its looks; it uses its actions; it catches its thoughts; it longs to become another itself; it suffers with its sufferings; it often sees them sooner, feels them more, than the sufferer himself. It is an awful question, my brethren, but how can we love the Lord if we suffer not with Him? How can we really, with the eye of faith, behold Him toiling, suffering, bruised, rejected of men, the Man of Sorrows, dying for our salvation? How can we have His crucified form really before our eyes, and ourselves like ever to be at ease? to have only joys, when His cup was all sorrow? to be honoured by the world by whom He was despised? to have sweetness when He tasted the gall? to have but rest, when He had only toil? to live but for enjoyment, when He loved only to suffer? How could we now bear to feel that He is still despised, still rejected, that the fruits of His Passion are lost, the price of His blood wasted, and we be at ease, be moved by no holy fervour, be not borne out of ourselves, look on carelessly at the waste of souls for whom He shed His blood, unless we were also wasting the price of that blood in ourselves? Ye know well how in human love sympathy increases love; how proverbial truth says that pity is akin to love; how we then seem first to know what love is when we suffer with and for whom we love. Earthly feelings are the type of heavenly; they are the prelude, the practice of everlasting love. Try then in Divine love what ye have found true in human. Deprive yourselves of some pleasure, forego

some ease, give up what shall cost thee something, out of love for Him who gave His whole self to thee, and say to Himself, 'Lord, who hast so loved me, this would I do out of love to Thee,' and He, the Fount of love, shall distil some drop of His everlasting love into thy soul, and thou shalt know how self-denial deepens love now. Sweeter far one whisper of His love in thy inmost soul, known to thee alone, one thrilling touch of His good pleasure, than the whole world without His presence. But then will ye have some taste how riches, and all their train of vanity, show, luxury, pleasures of sense, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, are a thick, damp, heavy mist, hindering the Sun of Righteousness from kindling the soul's love and drawing it up to Him. Suffer but ever so little for the love of Christ, and thou wilt find that to suffer is to win, to put from thee all suffering is to lose Christ. . . .

It is then another exceeding peril of riches and ease, that they may tend to make us forget that here is not our home. Men on a journey through a stranger's, much more an enemy's, land, linger not. Their hearts are in their home, thither are their eyes set; they love the winds which have blown over it; they love the very hills which look upon it, even while they hide it; days, hours, and minutes pass quickly or slowly as they seem to bring them near to it; distance, time, weariness, strength, all are counted only with a view to this: 'Are they nearer to the faces they love; can they, when shall they, reach it?' What then, my brethren, if our eyes

are not set upon the everlasting 'hills, whence cometh our help'? if we cherish not those inward breathings, which come to us from our heavenly home, hushing, refreshing, restoring, lifting up our hearts, and bidding us flee away and be at rest?

What if we are wholly satisfied and intent on things present? Can we be longing for the face of God? or can we love Him whom we long not for? or do we long for Him, if we say not daily, 'When shall I come and appear before the Presence of God'? In a place which we are soon to part from we buy not houses or fields; are not anxious how we are lodged; take things, so to speak, as we find them; use them as not our own, set no value upon them; we are among them as among things strange and foreign to us; we wish nothing otherwise, because it is but for a short time. And yet, if we for one moment steadfastly gaze upon Eternity, one unceasing, unchanging, ineffable brightness of bliss, or darkness of sorrow, how does, not the mere span of the longest life, but the utmost length of time which thought can reach, shrink up into a nothing, a thing which is and is not, for it has ceased to be? It is then a contradiction to say that we are strangers and pilgrims, and to use this earth as a home; to say that we are looking for another country, and to take up with this; to heap around us things of sense and time, to dwell with pleasure upon them, and to say that we are looking for the things eternal. What says Scripture?—'The time is short; it remaineth that both they that

have wives be as though they had none; and they that weep as though they wept not; and they that rejoice as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy as though they possessed not.' What did they, the early Christians, whose hearts were really in heaven with their Lord? They left all, and followed Him. They, 'as many as were possessors of lands and houses, sold them, and brought the prices, and laid them at the apostles' feet.' 'Many sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all, as every man had need.' Safe and blessed was it for those who could and can do so; and perilous are riches, because they so withdraw us from the apostolic life, fix us so much upon things present, make this life feel something substantial and real, spread around us so many things to rivet us to this earth, make us content to be here, make this world our end, because we are so much at ease in it; dull our longings for God, because our hunger is stifled, not satisfied with this clay; empty men's souls of God, because filled with His creatures. And therefore, when God would try His friends with riches, He sent them, first or last, sharp trials, to make them feel that Himself, not His gifts, were 'their exceeding great reward.' Abraham was very rich in cattle and silver and gold, but these were not the gifts of God, until he had first left his father's house, and all that he had, in poverty, and a stranger, not knowing whither he went, having chosen God for his All. Isaac was persecuted by the Philistines. Jacob was a wanderer, and his

days were evil. Joseph was sold as a slave, and his feet hurt in the stocks, ere he became lord of Egypt. David was an outcast, hunted up and down for his life upon the mountains. Job was an example of suffering affliction and patience. In one word, we may say that God has either tried His friends exceedingly before or amid riches, or, as Moses and Elisha and S. Matthew, called upon them to abandon them. To Solomon, perhaps, alone gave He them without outward sorrow, until almost the close of life, having first given him the heart to choose the true wisdom rather than riches, and at the last bringing him back by inward emptiness, and manifold vexations from without, to his first choice, that to 'fear God, and keep His commandments is the whole duty of man.'

Truly, there is not one part of the Christian character which riches, in themselves, do not tend to impair. Our Lord placed at the head of evangelic blessings poverty of spirit, and, as a help to it, and image of it, the outward body of the soul of true poverty,—poverty of substance too. The only 'riches' spoken of in the New Testament, except as a woe, are the unsearchable riches of the glory and grace of Christ, the richness of the goodness of God, the depth of the riches of His wisdom, or the riches of liberality. Earthly riches it names only to warn against their deceitfulness, uncertainty, unrighteousness, to teach us how to make friends of a deadly enemy. At the head of His blessings, He sets, 'Blessed be ye poor;' at the head of His woes, 'Woe

unto you that are rich;' surely, thereby, at least, warning us that the outward poverty which He chose is the best nurse for poverty of spirit; that as 'the love of riches' is the root of all evil, so riches are a woe, lest men love them. What grace, wellnigh, do they not tend to injure? They twine themselves so around us, tender at first and slight, and then hold us so by the iron grasp of habit, that we scarce feel their power in stinting our spiritual growth, until we try to burst them. Humility is the foundation of all grace; pride the summit of all sin. Yet everything around the rich, every daily, hourly circumstance of life, from very childhood, makes humility difficult. To be waited upon by fellow-Christians, not of charity only, but as a superior, to give commands, rarely to have to obey, to be accustomed to be obeyed, to be spoken to with deference, to have what others wish for, to depend visibly upon no one, to meet few contradictions or rough words,—we can scarcely feel, until we desire earnestly to be humble, what an atmosphere of pride and self-satisfaction these things spread around us. Thou must well study thine own nothingness, wouldst thou learn to be really last, when in station among the first. Again, our Lord says, 'Woe unto you that are rich, for ye have received your consolation,' 'Woe unto you that are filled,' and 'Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness;' yet the very fulness of outward things makes it harder to hunger after things inward. 'Beware,' says God Himself, 'lest when thou hast eaten and art filled, and hast

built goodly houses and dwell therein, and when thy flocks and herds multiply, and thy silver and gold are multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied,'—of what would He have us then beware, my brethren, for all these things are what *we* are surrounded with, have pleasure in, court? 'Beware,' He says, 'lest then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the Lord thy God.' 'It is difficult, nay, impossible,' says a Father (S. Jerome), 'to enjoy both the things present and the things to come, to fill here the belly and there the soul; to pass from delights unto delights; to be first in both worlds and shine glorious both in heaven and earth.' Would we above wear the crown of gold, here we must wear the crown of thorns. 'Remember, son, thou in thy lifetime hadst thy good things.' 'We were not,' says a holy man, 'cast out of Paradise to make another paradise for ourselves.'

Poverty is, at least, a fostering nurse for humility, meekness, patience, trust in God, simplicity, sympathy with the sufferings of our Lord, or of its fellow (for it knows the heart of those who suffer). What when riches, in themselves, hinder the very grace of mercifulness which seems their special grace, of which they are the very means! What wonder that they cherish that brood of snakes, pride, arrogance, self-pleasing, self-indulgence, self-satisfaction, trust in self, forgetfulness of God, sensuality, luxury, spiritual sloth, when they deaden the heart to the very sorrows they should relieve! And yet it is difficult, unless, through self-discipline, we feel some suffering, to sympathise with those who suffer.

Fulness of bread deadens love. As a rule, the poor show more mercy to the poor out of their poverty, than the rich out of their abundance.

But if it is a peril to *have* riches, much more is it to *seek* them. To have them is a trial allotted to any of us by God; to seek them, is our own. Through trials which He has given us He will guide us; but where has He promised to help us in trials which we bring upon ourselves? Whence also Holy Scripture speaks of this special peril, 'They that will to be rich fall into a temptation, and a snare, and many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition' (1 Tim. vi. 9). For what men have themselves made, they love the more. They are a sort of offspring, which they cherish with a parent's love, the end for which they have toiled, for which they serve; yea, they are the very idols which they first make with their hands, and then fall down before them, and worship as gods. 'Covetousness,' says Scripture, 'is idolatry.' And yet this is the very end and aim in this our country, the very nerve of what men do, the very ground of their undertakings, to keep or to enlarge their wealth. A spirit of enterprise infects all; it is the very air men live in; prosperity is our idol, the very measure of good or ill, the very end to which they refer all other ends; and what is this but their God?

In all this I have not spoken of any grosser sins to which the love of money gives birth, of what all fair men would condemn; and yet which, in some shape

or other, so many practise. Such are hardness to the poor or to dependants, using a brother's service for almost nought, in order to have more to spend in luxury; petty, or more grievous frauds; falsehood, hard dealing, taking advantage one of another, envying one another, forgetting natural affection. And yet, in this Christian land, many of these are very common. Holy Scripture warns us all not to think ourselves out of danger of them. The wealthy Ahab, whose palace was of ivory, slew Naboth for a garden of herbs; Judas, an Apostle, for thirty pieces of silver sold his Lord and God.

It is then, in tender compassion to us, that Almighty God opens to us now, more than heretofore, ways of showing love to Him, of making friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, of freeing ourselves from a burden, that so we may mount the more easily to our heavenly home, our riches may wing our prayers, our alms ascend, and plead for us before the throne of God, and we ourselves be more likened unto Him, Who for our sakes became poor, if for our brethren's sake we too become poorer, that so we may find in Him the true riches.

From a Sermon preached at Bristol, 1850.

'Blessed are the Meek.'

Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.
S. Matt. v. 5.

The Beatitudes stand in the forefront of the Gospel as a sort of proclamation, what must be the minds of those, who would be, themselves, followers of Jesus Christ, good soldiers in His army, which was to prevail by the Blood of the Lamb, and, through the merits of that one meritorious Sacrifice, their own self-sacrifice, until the kingdoms of this world should become the kingdoms of God and His Christ. This their purpose was not explained then. But thus much lay upon the surface, that when the multitudes came around, Jesus went up into a mountain and pronounced these blessings as a prelude to His fuller teaching. He seems to say, by the place which He assigns to them, 'Of such as these, and these only, is My kingdom: this is the alphabet to be learned by My disciples: whoso learneth not these first precepts will be turned back by others, with which he will meet hereafter: look well at them, acknowledge them, as at least to be worked into your souls hereafter, and so follow Me.' Plainly the very

union of them implies thus much, that no one is complete in itself. No one could or would fulfil the one who had not learned others also. To mention two, not on the surface connected—the merciful and the pure in heart,—how many in the world's estimation seem to be merciful to a certain degree, *i.e.* to have pity on the poor, to do generous actions, who yet do not profess to be pure in heart! Yet Nathan's parable, which brought repentance to David, shows how intensely selfish impurity becomes. All those who suffer by man's sins, of which they become the accomplices, were some one's 'little ewe lambs' once: anyhow they were Christ's lambs, washed by His blood, sealed by His mark, received into His bosom.

But, also, there is this common to all, that they all imply some degree of self-denial, self-sacrifice, or temporal hardness, willingly endured for the sake of God. Of some this is expressed, as of those in whom the blessings culminate, those who are 'persecuted for righteousness' sake,' and, 'When men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake.' But 'mourning,' too, is from some outward or inward sorrow, although this issues in the cry of the soul to God: rarely would it, unoccasioned by aught besides, be solely from the soul's missing its seemingly absent God. Hunger and thirst after righteousness are the burning disquiet of the soul, through the body of death in which it is imprisoned. and for its unlikeness to its God. The

histories of saints attest with what hardness and self-discipline purity of soul is, by the grace of God, maintained: the history of sinners, how incompatible it is with self-indulgence or fulness of bread! Mercifulness, in its very name, implies a fellow-suffering. Compassion, sympathy, *mitleid*, mark by their very names that there is no true fellow-feeling unless we ourselves, in our degree, suffer with those who suffer. Of involuntary poverty there can be no question; all by nature shrink from it, as involving privation, hardship, scarcity of things pleasant, bodily sufferings; and yet, well used, it must be blessed, since it was the lot which our Lord chose for Himself and His Apostles. Poverty of spirit also cannot be obtained but by much mental privation, cutting off occasions of self-display, curbing its own spirit, checking all self-elation, whether from within or from worldly prosperity or popular favour, immersing itself evermore in the abyss of its own nothingness, and knowing itself to be nothing (not saying it only) and God to be all.

So, lastly, as to this beatitude, 'Blessed are the meek.' Meekness is not easiness of disposition, even if 'not' by nature 'easily provoked:' it is not sweetness of temper, beautiful as this is. It is not kindliness, nor gentleness, nor kind-heartedness. These are, or may be, beautiful natural gifts of God. It is a grace formed by suffering; as, in the language moulded by the Spirit of God, afflicted, suffering, meek, humble, are scarcely distinguishable; a prosperous man in this

world would not ordinarily have these graces specially called out, and so, in the Old Testament, in which God drew His servants more, as little children, by temporal rewards, the mention of meekness is rare, and those who are so called are mostly implied to have been in suffering; as one would not call one 'patient' who had nothing to endure. It is, we know, 'one who suffers.'

So, beautiful and joyous as this our redeemed world is, because it is engoldened with light from above, suffering is stamped upon it as the condition of God-given excellence. So was each pattern of meekness in the Old Testament formed. How fiery was Moses, when he thought that his brethren would have understood by his slaying the Egyptian, how that God by his hand would deliver them! And God sent him into the wilderness, and tamed him for those forty years, with no employment that we know of, but to tend the flock of his father-in-law: to long, it may be, for the redemption of his people, and to hold converse with his God, until, when he had reached the utmost limit of man's usual term of life, God sent him armed with His own might, but with his shepherd's crook only for his weapon. When he said, in consciousness of his own powerlessness, 'Who am I that I should go unto Pharaoh, that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?' then was he a fitting instrument in the hands of Him who useth the 'weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty.' Yet,

not even so, nor until he had endured the continued contradiction and ingratitude of God's people, ever hardening their hearts at each fresh trial, reproaching him for their deliverance, almost ready to stone him, ready to be worn out by his daily toil for them, interceding with God again and again for them, did he come to be entitled 'very meek above all the men which were upon the face of the earth,' and then God declared unto him that He would speak with him 'mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold.'

How does the apostle, who had learned the blessedness of endurance ('we count them happy which endure,' as if it were the received maxim and practice of Christians), how does he burst out in admiration at the patience of Job, as an example to us, 'Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord,' how He requited him. 'Blessed,' says a Father, 'was Job, while he lived righteously in riches; but more blessed when he was more righteous in poverty. Blessed was he when surrounded by ten sons; more blessed when, stricken at once with fatherlessness of all, he remained immoveable in the love of God. Blessed was he in soundness of body; more blessed was he made by its sores; more blessed too amid the ashes, than in the palace inlaid with marble.'

How meek was David, when his humility moved even Saul, who was seeking his life: 'After whom dost thou pursue? after a dead dog, after a flea?' or again, in

the humility of his penitence, when he said to those who would avenge him, 'Let him curse, since God hath said unto him, Curse David.' One brief hour of self-exaltation and self-confidence brought those terrible sins, which have been an occasion for blasphemy to this day, that God so forgave and so loved one who had so sinned, but who, save in that one dreadful fall, so loved Him, and so repented.

What should one say of that great cloud of witnesses, unknown to man, but known to God, the saints and martyrs of the Old Testament, types beforehand of our Lord, who 'had trials of mockings and scourgings, of bonds and imprisonments, who were stoned, sawn asunder, slain with the sword, wandering in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, afflicted, tormented'?

And when He, the long-expected, was to come; He to 'whom the obedience of the nations' was to be; He in whom 'all the families of the earth were to be blessed;' He Who should crush the head of the Enemy of our race; He, through Whom the law was to 'go forth out of Sion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem,' 'Who should judge among many people, and judge strong nations afar off,'—in what guise was He to come? We know the Gospel written in the prophets. As one 'whom man despiseth; He Whom the nation abhorreth; He, the servant of rulers,' Who 'gave His back to the smiters, and His cheeks to them that plucked off the hair;' Who 'hid not His face from shame and spitting;' 'despised and rejected of men,

the Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with grief;' oppressed and willingly enduring it, yet withal 'brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and, as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth.' He should come a king, but in no kingly guise: lowly, and riding on an ass; kings should arise and worship, because He was despised; He should justify many, because He should bear their iniquities; He should divide the spoil, 'because He poured out His soul unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors.'

And when He came to save us, how was He received? The beloved disciple sums it up: 'The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not. He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not.' Until the hour came to fulfil His mission, He increased in favour with man as with God. But He! S. Paul, even after having spoken of those Sufferings of the Cross, singles out as the chief, 'Behold Him, Who endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself.' Those sufferings were to Him what we cannot imagine. For He only knew the depths of endless misery from which He came to save them; and they, in their contradiction, refused to be saved. He only knew that portion of endless bliss, in which He would have placed each of them; and they, one by one, would not. He alone knew the infinite depth of that holiness against which they blasphemed. He only, in His infinite love, could feel what

a wound it was to that love. Conceive yourself, with charred hands, labouring to rescue a tender child from the fire which would consume her, and her even passionately putting aside the hand which would rescue her, and turning the more to it. And yet this was the whole of His ministry! The more He would do for them, the more they turned against Him. Holy Scripture gives some few instances of it; but, at the last, when the Chief Priests and all the Council sought for false witness against Jesus to put Him to death, 'many,' we are told, 'bare false witness against Him; but their witness agreed not together.' God did not will that Holy Scripture should be occupied with the false witnesses which they then bare. It mentions only one thing which they alleged, which so far was nearly true. They alleged that they themselves heard Him say it: yet they alleged it wrongly, for they say, 'We heard Him say, I will destroy,' whereas He said, 'Destroy;' which, of course, they would not do as to their material temple. Yet even so their inferences were untrue: 'Neither so did their witness agree together.' Yet they would have Him answer their false-witness, hoping even thus to extract something which they might distort against Him. How they watched Him and sent forth spies, which might feign themselves just men, that they might take hold of His words! And when He, who shall be Judge of quick and dead, was before His earthly judge, they poured out what they thought that they had gathered. Yet even thus 'their witness agreed

not together.' Him Whose meat it was to do the will of Him who sent Him, they called 'a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber:' Him Who was the Truth, and of whom they bare witness, 'We know that Thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth,' they called 'that deceiver;' 'He deceiveth the people.' Him Who came to destroy the works of the devil, they called by the name of that blasted spirit, 'Beelzebub,' 'Thou hast a devil.' 'Say we not well, that Thou hast a devil?' 'He hath a devil, and is mad. Why hear ye Him?' It would be too shocking if Holy Scripture had embodied all the coarse things which the infuriated crowd said; but we can imagine them in some degree from the things in which a rough modern crowd would vent itself against any object of their displeasure. They blindfolded Him, and struck Him on the face, and asked Him, 'Prophesy unto us, thou Christ, who is he that smote Thee?' As if they would say, 'Aha! aha! now we have brought Thy claims to be a prophet to the test, and Thou canst not vindicate Thyself;' and the coarse jeers ring in our ears, as they afterwards challenged Him and mocked Him: 'If He be the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him.' And Jesus kept that Divine silence, and only answered their 'Crucify Him! Crucify Him!' with 'Father, forgive them.'

Was the disciple to be 'above his Master, or the servant above his Lord'? 'It is enough,' our Lord says, 'for the disciple to be as his Master, and the

servant as his Lord.' 'If they called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more them of his household!' How do the apostles describe their calling? S. Paul speaks in the name of them all: 'God hath set forth us, the Apostles, last, as a spectacle to the world, and to Angels and to men.' And what was this drama, which was to be beheld, to fix the minds of men and Angels? Suffering and revilings, endured patiently. 'We,' he says, 'are accounted fools for Christ; weak, despised; to this hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place; being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer; being defamed, we entreat: we are made as the filth of the earth, the offscouring of all things unto this day.' And another apostle speaks of it, as a matter of course, an every-day thing, 'whereas they speak of you as evil-doers.' And the Jews at Rome knew nothing of them, but that 'as concerning this sect, we know that everywhere it is spoken against.'

So it continued to be. No charge was too absurd to be believed. They, the purity of whose lives was attested by the heathen, were persecuted for incests in their public worship; they who abstained from such use of blood as remained in things strangled, were believed in their worship to eat infants. A Christian they accounted 'an enemy of the gods, of the emperors, of the law, of morals, of all nature;' yet dreaded to inquire, lest they should find the accusation false. 'Folly, vanity, old wives' fables, puerile frenzies,' and

the like, were the common heathen mockery. But 'the foolishness of God' proved 'wiser than men, the weakness of God was stronger than men.' As individuals were won to the Gospel by the observed meekness of their fellow-travellers, so was the world won by the sufferings of Christians. So was our Lord's prophecy fulfilled,—'The meek shall inherit the earth.' Shall inherit it! It was not theirs; they got it not through might of their own, but as His inheritance, to Whom they belonged, Whose they were, Whose lowliness they followed, Who suffered in them, Who spake by them, Who crowned them, and was crowned in them, to Whom it had been said, 'I will give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for Thy possession.' 'Inasmuch as they had been taught not to resist,' says an early apologist, 'they kept this gentle and loving law; therefore they accomplished what they had not, had they, mighty as they were, received permission to war.' 'The Church, shivering the assaults of the Pagans, was more and more strengthened, not by resisting, but by enduring.' 'That very obstinacy with which ye upbraid us is the teacher. For who is not stirred up by the contemplation of it to inquire what there is in the core of the matter? Who, when he hath inquired, doth not join us? Who, when he hath joined us, doth not long to suffer?'

The condition of the victory of the Gospel, in the appointment of God, was three centuries of meek and patient suffering. It was not for want of strength.

'We can count your armies; our numbers in a single province will be greater. For what war should we not be sufficient and ready, even though unequal in number; who so willingly are put to death, if it were not, in this religion of ours, more lawful to be slain than to slay?' But so had God foretold: 'Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.' And so God spread them, through suffering, within and without the Roman Empire. The king of Parthia was the conquest of the Gospel earlier than Constantine. It ran like lightning from Britain to India; but its conquests everywhere were through its own blood, or, since they belonged to Jesus, in a manner anew the blood of Jesus, since the apostle says, 'We are members of His Body, of His Flesh, and of His Bones.' It has survived all empires; it is not confined, like the Buddhist atheism, or the Brahmin pantheism, however numerous their adherents, to single, however large, localities; it is still prevailing; and the only religion which propagates like it, is a heresy from it; which learned what it has of truth from an apostate monk and a Jewish renegade. It wins from all; it loses to none.

Hindered though we be through our sad divisions, to the heathen we seem but one, who worship one God, the Trinity in Unity and Unity in Trinity, and have one hope of salvation in One Who took our nature upon Him, perfect God and yet perfect Man. East, west, north, and south, the compass of our Redeemer's kingdom is enlarged, as was said of old to the promised

king: 'The people shall be subdued unto thee, even in the midst of the king's enemies. Instead of thy fathers thou shalt have children, whom thou mayest make princes in all lands.'

> 'For they the Church's princes are,
> Triumphant leaders in the war,
> In heavenly courts a warrior band,
> True lights to lighten every land.'

What times are coming upon the earth, He only knows in whose hand are the hearts of men, and the times and seasons, in which He shall accomplish His work upon earth, and shall fill up the number of the saved. It so belongs to a Christian to long for His coming, that those who love Him have often expected it, and yet the tokens vanished. Now again there are more than usual signs of some great impending strife between good and evil, such as has not been for many generations; but whether the last or no, He only knows whose coming will end it. Human plans are on a gigantic scale. Satan seems to be marshalling his hosts for the battle, while he deludes people into the persuasion that he himself exists not. All middle forms of unbelief seem to be disappearing, all the gods which men made and called them 'the deity,' or 'the first cause,' are seen to be the phantoms which they ever were: one only choice is left, God as He has revealed Himself, or an abyss of nothingness.

In this strife, my sons, you will, you must, each have your part, and, I trust, a glorious part, ending in that

glory, to which our Lord will call His faithful servants, that glorious throne for which God created each one of you, and which He has created for you; that special place around the eternal Throne which, in all eternity, He had in His mind for each; your very own place, belonging to you (unless you wilfully forfeit it), which He purchased for you with His own precious blood; and which is vacant still for you until He have perfected you in obedience, humility, and love.

You have come here to be developed in all the powers of mind and body, not in any stiff or constrained or narrow way, but in largeness of heart; you have come to cultivate your powers, as he, whose name and memory is your founder, did; who, when but twenty, had gained all the higher honours here, and in whose clear, brilliant, penetrating eye, after above fifty years of toil, and, of late, of heart- and strength-consuming anxiety for souls and for the Church, that intellect shone unto the end; and 'the seraph's fire that burned within flung its glory over eye and lip and brow.' But more: you have come to this school of faith, in contrast with the world's faithlessness; you have come to this school of simplicity, in contrast with the world's ever-degenerating, heartless, enervating self-indulgence; you have come to be followers of him, as he was of Christ, in his intense reality, in contrast with the world's whited sepulchre of unreality; you have come to be loyal servants of your God amid all the prevailing disloyalty; as good soldiers of Jesus Christ, who marked you as

His own, ere yet you knew Him, while that mark, alas! brands so many only as deserters. You have come, I hope, to be courageous in the name of the Captain of your salvation, the Lord of hosts, amid the world's mean shrinking cowardice, crouching before man's opinion. You would, with generous hearts, shrink from ingratitude, treacherousness, cowardice, hypocrisy, you will be faithful by His grace, loving, loyal to Him Who has so loved you, Who in those awful hours on the cross had each one of you in His heart, and died for you as if there had been no other to die for.

You are now in numbers, the fourth of those gathered here in walls like these, who are a good proportion of the future hope of educated England. What may not such a phalanx do, knit together in the one love of Him, Who loved each one of you with an individual, yet infinite love! You will never know in this life the value of what you do, or of what God will do through you; nay, you will seem a failure and disappointment to yourselves, the more God raises your ideal of what, by His grace, He would do in you. The shallow only can be self-conceited. But you will have a power within you greater than those against you. Unbelief, whatever vain confident show it may put on, loud as it may speak, or credulous as it may be of every novelty contrary to faith, feels its own inward uncertainty. It must be sceptical of its own scepticism. A little child on its knees has awakened a misgiving even in an intellectual unbeliever. It has what the other has not. You have

a vantage-ground in faith, with which unbelieving intellect cannot cope. Boastful as its garrison may be, it is betrayed from within. It will overlook argument; it will elude proof; it will despise authority; it must, while it remains such, ignore its unseen, unknown God. The certain serene convictions of faith make it uneasy, as being of heavenly birth; and God the Holy Ghost is ever brooding over this chaos, as over that primeval darkness; the ocean of God's love is ever winding, this way and that, over the hard rocks, if so be it may find entrance in; Christ, Whom they know not, is ever invisibly interceding for them. Only, as said the dying Joshua, 'be ye very courageous to keep and to do all' that is commanded you.

Let Christ be ever in your hearts; keep His Cross ever before your eyes. He Himself looks down from His glory upon you; He fights and conquers in His faithful servants; He rejoiceth in them, O what joy like that of giving joy to our Redeeming Lord! what joy like that of gaining by His grace even one soul, to joy in Him for ever!

SERMON PREACHED AT THE OPENING OF KEBLE COLLEGE, 1876.

The Responsibility of Intellect in matters of Faith.

He that rejecteth Me, and receiveth not My words, hath One that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.—S. John xii. 48.

. . . It is tacitly assumed that intellect is a safe and unbiassed guide; that its determinations, though not infallible, are sure and unblamable; that, if any implicitly follow it, as a pagan philosopher might follow it, apart from any grace of God, or prayer for His illumining, nay, abstracting one's-self for the time from the light of the Gospel,—its conclusions, although in different minds naturally contradictory and self-destructive, are necessarily right for each; that in the things of God too, what is newest is right, what is old is superannuated and wrong, forgetting that the truths of God are eternally new as Himself, being a transcript of a portion of His unchangeable wisdom. Anyhow, men will have it, that no responsibility is incurred, be the result of any process of reasoning what it may, any more than in a proposition of mathematics; that there is no right or wrong about it; in a word, that if a person

thinks he is pursuing truth, though he be more anxious to have truth on his side than to be on the side of truth, conscience and Almighty God have no voice in the matter. The thought that each shall have to give account for his 'opinions' (as people call them), or the process by which he arrived at them, seems to them as strange an imagination as if the subject-matter were some proposition of pure mathematics.

Contrariwise, I could point out to you the responsibility of intellect; that it, as well as every other good gift of God, is capable of being abused; that, as 'the corruption of the best is the worst,' so the perversion of intellect has a melancholy pre-eminence of evil, as, in actual madness, the sight of a mind dethroned has a sorrowfulness beyond any guiltless sorrow; that, not speaking now of hereditary error, human intellect is liable to be influenced with every wave and eddy of human passion; that the darkness of bribed or misguided or perverted intellect is the more perilous because it *is* our guide which we trust, a darkness irremediable, unless it be again illumined by light from on high. 'If the light that is *in* thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!'

Intellect has, it is plain, many trials. There is not a sin or crime of our lower nature which it does not aggravate, or in aid of which it is not abused. There is not a spiritual sin of which it is not the instrument or centre. There is nothing so debased to which, in the service of passion, it will not stoop; no vastness of

evil which it will not conceive and animate. It invents ways by which to teach or incite our lower nature to offend against the laws of our nature. It will devise evil, from which our lower fellow-creatures, following blindly the laws of their limited capacities, are exempt. It conceives and effectuates those gigantic crimes at which the world grows pale. All the vices of our nature are puny and dwarfed without it. It guides to deeper evil each varied passion of our fallen nature. It severs off the seducer from the coarse and vulgar profligate; low cunning from commonplace cheating; sophistry from naked untruth; subtle revenge from brute anger. The worst title which we could give, to brand an action of cruelty, or revenge, or malice, or barbarity, or sensuality, would be to call it 'refined,' 'subtle;' meaning that intellect was more than usually abused to the service of man's lower passions. 'Did you never observe,' asks Plato, 'the narrow intellect flashing from the keen eye of a clever rogue, how clearly his paltry soul sees the way to his end; he is the reverse of blind, but his keen sight is taken into the service of evil, and he is dangerous in proportion to his intelligence?'

Abused intellect makes proverbs of Balaam, or Ahithophel, or Jonadab, or Simon Magus. No world-wide evil ever existed without it. The scourges of mankind fell not like mere avalanches, but wielded through it their widely desolating might. If we could describe an almost superhuman abuse of intellect to

evil, we call it by the name of that being of tremendous subtlety of talent, the fallen archangel, and term it 'devilish.' The Massacre of S. Bartholomew bears witness to the wonderful talent as well as the terrible wickedness of its author, Catherine of Medicis.

. . . But since, through the whole range of human crime and sin, the abuse of intellect has its distinct and powerful sway, and ignorance and stupidity, if not self-caused, seem to human justice also a mitigation of participated guilt, and, contrariwise, clear intellect is, by universal consent, held to be an aggravation of human crime, how comes it to be assumed that, when brought face to face with Almighty God, intellect has no trial, but that, let intellect treat His revelation how it will, let it reject, rebel, pare away, distort, ridicule, blaspheme it, how it may; let it substitute, if it will, some worship of nature or of itself, for the living God, man is blameless, because it is matter of intellect? If man is hurried away, by passions of his lower nature, to break God's laws, he is allowed to be (as he is) guilty; if, without passion, he show contempt to God Himself, he is to be held innocent! Heat of passion is held to be an extenuation of deeds of violence, because a man is less master of himself. It shocks our nature the more, if they be done in cold blood, as men say. Cold, dispassionate judgments, if directed against Almighty God and His truth, are matter of self-praise. What ground can be given for these uneven measures, but that, alas! men are judges in their own cause?

. . . In the light of the history of Christianity, we, even apart from our faith, can discern the pride of those who superciliously dismissed it as unworthy of their notice. On the one side was the Carpenter and His disciples, the fishermen, the tax-gatherer, and the tent-maker. On the other, the great world-subduing empire, its marvellous political sagacity, its centuries of glory, and the hereditary wisdom of those wonderful creations of God, those keen, penetrating intellects of grace which still form and sharpen our own intellects. The pride of intellect or power had temptations which we see only as in a picture, yet unconquerable save by the over-powering grace of God. But how do we look back upon it? Christian history alone embalms the lifeless memories of Pilate, who asked, 'What is truth?' or of Gallio, who 'cared for none of these things;' or of the Epicurean or Stoic philosophers who counted Paul 'a babbler;' or of the philosophers of Mars' hill, who mocked at the resurrection of Jesus; or of Festus, who held that it was a small matter that 'one Jesus, who was dead,' Paul affirmed to be alive.

Or, in these days in which free inquiry is idolised, what think we of the terms wherewith heathen intellect dismissed the claims before which the intellect of the world has bowed? Looking at the Gospel for the moment as a power transforming mankind, what can we think of such terms as these, employed to designate and dismiss it,—'folly,' 'vain folly,' 'vanity,' 'empty vanity,' 'execrable vanity,' 'blind error,' 'pernicious error,' 'vain

and mad superstition,' 'old wives' superstitions' or 'doctrines' or 'fables' or 'inventions and absurdities,' 'womanly superstition,' 'puerile frenzies' or 'follies,' 'things ridiculous,' 'foolish trifles,' 'unreasonable belief,' 'presumption,' 'credulity,' 'frenzy'? Or what bias was it to praise 'the just man, tenacious of his purpose, whose firm-poised soul no tyrant's threatening mien should shake, nor popular zeal enjoining things perverse,' and yet condemn for 'inflexible obstinacy which ought to be punished,' 'rash desperation,' 'frenzy,' those who, rather than curse or deny their Saviour, accounted all suffering, joy, and by three centuries of endurance, conquered the world which would exterminate them? Did those who used these terms leave their intellect free to appreciate that 'power of God unto salvation,' which they kept at a distance, and condemned unheard? Had not 'the wisdom of this world' been wiser, if it had been humbler, and had listened instead of scoffing? But is there then no pride, whensoever intellect dismisses beforehand the claims of the Creator to be heard by His creature, because it is too much occupied with the things of this world, its politics, its passionate pursuit of material prosperity, its scientific investigation of the works of God, whom it ignores? Is there no pride in regarding the Creator as a disturbing force to the laws of His creation, or in dismissing the proofs which He has given of His Being, His Providence, His revelation of Himself, because He cannot be discerned by our senses, or beheld by human vision, until in the

beatific vision, it be enabled by Himself to behold Himself?

. . . 'The natural (or animal) man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither *can* he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.' The earthly mind becoming akin to the things which he dwells upon 'has no sense but for them;' to them 'he cleaves with the glue of love and wont; their image he carries back to his soul, and converses with them, and, inured to them, is unable to think or imagine aught but what is corporeal.' He realises not, of his own will, spiritual and divine things; for all is foolishness to him except what furnishes fuel to his passions, and, in the end, he *cannot* know them, because they are discerned by the God-enabled spirit of man, which he enslaves and immerses in the flesh. 'Had they, whose intellect is now enslaved to evil,' says Plato, 'been in their youth severed from the leaden weights with which they were born into the world, which hang on to sensual pleasure, and drag them down and turn the visions of their souls about the things which are below—had they been released from these and turned to the truth, the very same faculty,' by which they see their way to their poor ends, 'would have seen the other as keenly as they now see that on which their eye is fixed.'

May you, my sons, never, by experience, know how sensual passion withdraws energy from intelligence, dulls the faculties, weakens the powers of reasoning, blunts

the fineness of perception, indisposes to all spiritual things, induces, when habitual, scepticism as to the real duties of man, the reality of virtue, the sanctions of the laws of morality, or the freedom of the soul which it enslaves! Heathen mythology had a truth, which perhaps it knew not, when it represented its gods as transforming themselves into brute creatures when giving way to sensual passion.

Yet not active sin only, but mere inaction of faith, blinds the intellect to the truths of God. 'Faith without works is dead,' is a deep truth of our nature. Our faith lives in and by action; it was given us for action. The Gospel is not a philosophy, a speculation, an aggregate of opinions; it is a 'power of God unto salvation' putting itself forth in acts. Acts, enabled and brought into being by faith, nourish faith; they are essential to its health and well-being. Through acts of faith, God gives a conviction which is felt, more powerful than reasoning; discerning, above nature, divine truth. Contrariwise, inactive, unenergetic faith is a self-contradiction. Faith in truths above nature lawfully issues in acts above nature. Supernatural truth and supernatural life, *i.e.* a life of and from Divine grace, belong together. A believer who acts not on his belief is a living lie. The world, too, owns this, when it urges the inconsistencies of a professed believer as an argument against belief. Their outward acts belie their inward convictions. If the acts correspond not to the faith, the faith will sink down to the acts. 'Through this

pride of rebellion against the light it cometh,' says S. Gregory, 'that because they will not do what they know, they come not to know the good which they should do, but their own blindness shuts them out wholly from the light of truth.' Since, then, by turns, the intellect becomes ultimately the slave of every passion, and the heightener of every crime and sin, it is clearly no safeguard or bar against the charge of sin, that the immediate province of any act or series of acts lies in the intellect. Nor is its capacity of being warped limited to theology or morals, the special province of religion. It will slavishly dispute a truth wholly abstract, so soon as it perceives consequences, which it dislikes, which can be drawn from it.

. . . Every revelation of God, every interposition of His providence, every added light, every motion of His grace, must needs involve a sifting time. The more the light shines, the more, through that freewill, with which God has endowed us, must men come into light or retreat into darkness. The choice brings out what they were, and, if evil, aggravates it. 'This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.' Intellectually they chose, passionately they loved, darkness. The awful commission to Isaiah, and in turn to all who declare the mind of God, 'Say unto this people, Hear ye on, and understand not; see ye on, and know not. Make the heart of this people fat, and their eyes heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see

with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and their hearts understand, and convert, and be healed,' is fulfilled by man's freewill. The heart which will not receive God's truth becomes the more hardened against it the more it hears it. 'I am come,' our Lord says, 'a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on Me should not abide in darkness.' He came as the visible Revealer of the Father. Never, until by God's mercy we beheld the beatific vision, and see God as He is, the Ever-blessed Three in One, did man or could man so closely behold God. 'He that hath seen Me,' our Lord says, 'hath seen the Father.' For he saw *Him*, who, under that human form which out of love for us He took, was Almighty God. His Godhead they could not see, but He whom they saw was also, at that moment, 'in the bosom of the Father,' was 'in heaven.' They saw that manhood, which had no separate existence, no being, apart from Almighty God; who, though He was God and Man, was not two, but one Christ; whose personality was not human but Divine. They saw Him who shall be the joy of the blessed, who shall, even when we see God, be, with God, the Light of the Heavenly City. His words were the words of God. His eyes, Whose look of Divine love won the Magdalen, so laden with sins, and Peter, after his awful fall, and the robber by His side on the Cross, must have shone with a Divine lustre on those who heard Him. His words drew those, whom inwardly the Father drew, and at one word they left all and followed Him. And was there then no

responsibility in leaving Him? Could so close a nearness to God not bring responsibility to those who rejected Him? Could it be without guilt, when men distorted those words, charged Him with confederacy with the evil one, with blasphemy against His Father, Whose words He spake? Our Lord said that there *would be* a judgment, though not *then*. *Then* was still the time of mercy; *then* there was still room for repentance; *then* the words spoken against the Son of Man could still be forgiven; nay, our Lord enlarges to the utmost bound the contumelies against Himself which man in ignorance spake, which could yet be forgiven: 'All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men,' all, of which men should repent. But if any should finally reject Him, a judgment beyond this world still remained. 'He that rejecteth Me, and receiveth not My words, hath one that judgeth him; the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.' 'He that rejecteth Me.' Rejecteth whom? Him, their God; Him, very God, who 'for us and our salvation became man;' Him, Who in the One Love of the Father and the Son, came into the world to save the world. 'For God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.'

It was not, then, only the rejection of a message or revelation of God, as though man had still been in a state of innocence, and God were unfolding fresh measures of knowledge of Himself, such as the Infinite

God has in store for His saints in all eternity. This had been great insolence to God, could we conceive our first parents to have been guilty of it. It would seem a more hopeless fall than that which brought sin and death upon us, as being a more direct rejection of God. But now men have so come to be (as they think) on easy or equal terms with God, that, having ceased to think of Him as their Creator, they lose out of sight that they are not only His creatures, but guilty, rebel creatures; that God sent His Son into the world, not only or chiefly with a revelation of new truth to them, but of truth, by receiving which they might be saved. They forget that, by the manifold habitual breaking of God's laws, by offences, which they must themselves condemn, and did condemn, they are sinners, wholly unfit to enter into His Presence, where 'nothing defiled can enter;' incapable, through their manifold indulged and engrained evil passions, to find bliss in the Presence of the All-holy, All-pure, All-loving God. The rejection, then, of Jesus was the rejection of the way devised by the love of God for their salvation. Our race was, for our sins, under God's condemnation; we had set ourselves against Him; we had chosen evil against His good; we had misused His creatures against Himself; we had become a blot in the beauty of His creation; we had rebelled against Him, rejected Him as our Lord, become aliens from Him, disordered our nature, corrupted ourselves, defiled our souls, incapacitated ourselves for any participation in His holiness, or the

bliss which He had prepared for them who love Him, to which in all eternity He destined each of us, if, on His terms, we would have Him. From first to last the object and end of the Gospel is, that man should be saved from his sins, by belief in Jesus. 'His name,' it was said of Him before His birth, 'shall be called Jesus: for He shall save His people from their sins.' This He declared to be His mission; this the prophets spake with one mouth: 'To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins.' 'The Son of Man is come to seek and save that which is lost.' This was the object of His coming into the world, 'to save sinners.' 'One Mediator there is between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all.' 'Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.' It was then no new judgment, though all rejection of light must aggravate condemnation. They *were* already under condemnation; they refused Him through whom God willed them to be saved; they remained under condemnation. So our Lord continues: 'God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved: he that believeth on Him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God.' And this was of their own will, whence our

Lord says so mournfully, expostulatingly, to those who rejected and blasphemed Him, 'Ye *will* not come unto Me, that ye might have life.' 'I will it,' He says, 'but ye will it not,' as He says to Jerusalem, the slayer of the prophets, the stoner of those sent unto it, and soon to be His own crucifier: 'How often did *I will* to gather thee,' so tenderly under my fostering care, 'and *ye willed not.*' Oh that mournful terrible power of human will, which Almighty love wills to win, but which wills not to be won!

This, then, is the ground of that solemn sanction with which our Lord accompanies His commission to His Apostles to teach all nations: 'Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be condemned.'

By the very force of the words no one is included of all those generations who lived before Christ came, or whom the Gospel has not individually reached. The soul of the Church includes, we cannot doubt, 'a great multitude whom no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and peoples, and tongues,' who did not on earth belong to its body; as contrariwise believers, who led to the end bad lives and died impenitent, belonged, it may be, visibly to its body, but not to its soul. Jesus 'died for all.' He was 'a propitiation for the sins of the whole world;' for all who have been since Adam's sin unto the end; for all who have been or are or shall be; for all who knew Him or shall know

Him, or who shall blamelessly know Him not; for those who blindly 'felt after' Him, or for some one or something to stand between them and their sins; who by their hereditary although ignorant use of sacrifices, still acknowledged their guilt and separation from God; for those who throughout the world looked for a Deliverer to come; for those who by those 'unutterable groanings,' the mute restless longing of the human race, looked to the common Father of mankind. 'We are taught,' says S. Justin, 'that Christ is the first-born of God, and we have shown above that He is the Word of whom the whole human race are partakers, and those who lived according to reason are Christians, even though accounted atheists—so also they who have been before Him, and lived without reason, were worthless, and enemies of Christ, and murderers of those who governed their lives by reason; but they who loved and love in accordance with reason are Christians, and are fearless and tranquil.' But as to these, indeed, we need not witness from man. God has ruled it for us by S. Paul: 'When the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves, which show the work of the law written in their heart.' By whom could it be written but by the Spirit of God?

. . . That word of God stands sure: 'In every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted with Him.' For the Lord and Father of mankind, who willeth not that any should perish, has

not one way only of bringing home His lost sheep. All who shall be saved, shall be saved for the sake of that Precious Blood, which has redeemed our earth and arrayed it with Divine glory and beauty. Varied and beautiful, each with its special loveliness, will be the choirs of His elect. In those ever-open portals there enter, day and night, that countless multitude of every people, nation, and language; they who, in the Church, were by His grace faithful to Him, and they who knew not the Church of God, whom the Church below knew not how to win, or alas! neglected to win them, but whom Jesus looked upon, and the Father drew to Himself, whom His inner light enlightened, and who, out of the misery of our fallen state, drawn by His unknown grace, looked up yearningly to Him, their 'unknown God,' yet still *their* God, for He made them for Himself. There, out of every religion or irreligion, out of every clime, in whatever ignorance steeped, in whatever hatred or contempt or blasphemy of Christ nurtured, God has His own elect, who ignorantly worship Him, whose ignorant fear or longing He Who inspired it will accept.

No! ask any tolerably-instructed Christian person, and his instinct will respond to what every teacher of the Church everywhere knows to be truth. Ask him, 'Will any soul be lost, heathen, idolater, heretic, or in any form of hereditary unbelief or misbelief, if in good faith he was what he was, living up to the light which he had, whencesoever it came, and repenting him where he did

amiss?' All Christendom would answer you, God forbid! He would not be 'saved by that law which he professeth,' but he would be saved *in* it, by the one love of God the Father who made him, and of God the Son who redeemed him, and God the Holy Ghost who drew and in his measure sanctified him.

It has been through a strange ignorance, I may almost say, of Christianity itself, which at all times has condemned the error of those who denied the Lord who bought them, but has never pronounced on individuals, that this sudden storm has been raised against,

> 'The Psalm that gathers in one glorious lay,
> All chants that e'er from heaven to earth found way:
> Creed of the Saints, and Anthem of the Blest,
> And calm-breathed warning of the kindliest love
> That ever heaved a wakeful mother's breast.'

. . . And for you, my sons, remember that all this which I have said about the non-responsibility of those who, in any way, through ignorance or prejudice, by them invincible, are hindered from receiving the truth, has a reverse side to you. We 'are not of the darkness.' Us 'God hath called out of darkness into His marvellous light.' To us *He* says, who is the True Light, 'Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you; for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light.' God excuses unblamable ignorance. He says, by His apostle, 'The times of ignorance God winked at.' He has recovered

those who, through unfavourable circumstances of their surroundings, through the malformation of an almost natural scepticism, through doubt infused into them, perhaps through rash venturing in depths which they could not sound, or being, like him who became S. Augustine, seduced by those who promised him larger light, have lost their faith. God's mercies are boundless, or bounded only by our willingness to receive them. But of all hopeless cases, the most hopeless would seem unbelief engendered by levity. Yet such, I hear, still lingers among some of you, my sons. They speak of some who become 'positivists' through whatever bias of their own; of others, who (to use a term of their own) 'follow suit,' throwing off their faith as they would a worn-out dress, because it is not fashionable with those whose estimation of cleverness they esteem more than the good favour of Him who is Infinite Wisdom. A prophet of heathenism, and its highest intellect, yet speaks to you, 'My son, you are young, and the advance of time will make you renounce many of the opinions which you now hold. Wait, therefore, until the time comes, and do not attempt to judge of high matters at present; and that is the highest of which you think nothing—to know the gods rightly, and to fear accordingly. Of one thing of great importance I am quite certain: you and your friends are not the first who have held this about the gods. There have always been persons, more or less numerous, who have had the same disorder. I have known many of

them, and can tell you this, that no one who had taken up in youth this opinion, that the gods do not exist, ever continued in the same till he was old. What may be the true doctrine, if you are patient, you will hereafter discover. Meantime, take heed that you offend not about the gods.'

But you, if you despised or lightly set at naught God's revelation of Himself, would sin against light and love which Plato knew not of. We have a responsibility wholly different in kind from that which he had, or any one who, at this day, by circumstances of his birth, is outside of Christianity or of its full truth. In God's individual love for each of you, He has given you the faith whereby you may be saved. You have not to learn it; you have only not to unlearn it. No one scarcely loses his faith at once. It is so precious to the soul that God does not, unless driven forth from the soul by things or tempers incompatible with His presence, cease, even amid continued provocation, to continue that grace whereby alone we can retain it. But there are many preparations for that loss. At your age, the idle word, the repetition of the profane jest, the listening to, it may be, some pointed scoff at some un-understood character or phrase of Scripture, the first ashamedness of truth, because it is old, or, as some will tell you, antiquated, the first wish not to seem less advanced or enlightened than others, or less free from theological prejudice, or not to be behind the age (as it calls itself), or to be accounted as talented as

any talented equal, who may, alas! have lost his faith —these are the distant, and not always distant, preparations for the loss of faith. For they treat God with levity, and prefer the creature to the Creator. 'How can ye believe,' our Lord said, 'which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour which cometh from God only?' It is known that not long ago the young here often lost their faith, because they came ready to part with it. Then follow careless reading of books against faith, or truth, or, it may be, the being of God, which have their answers, but which answers, it may be, your thought or knowledge may not be matured enough to interpose between the suggested doubts and your soul. Then follow, alas! or accompany it, some of those tempers, pride or vainglory or the like, which shut out God, because they set up an idol, self, in His temple, your souls. 'Love truth,' said an experienced writer, almost proverbial for gentleness and love, 'love truth as much as you love your health, your vanity, your pleasure, your phantasy; you will find it.' It is a sore thing in the end to part with God, who made you, and redeemed you at such a price, that you might share His endless love. Draw nigh unto Him in truthfulness, and He who secretly draws you will draw nigh to you; seek Him, and He who willeth to be found, He who sought you, will be found of you; part not with Him wilfully, and because you prefer to Him something which is not He, and He will not depart from you.

'Of penitents sole hope and stay,
To wandering sinners kind;
To those who seek Thou art the way,
But what to those who find!'

God grant, when the time of your departure shall be at hand, each of you may be able to say with the aged Paul, in view of *his*,—'I have fought the good fight; I have finished my course, I have kept the faith;' and 'the Lord, the righteous Judge, give you in that day the crown of righteousness, laid up, not for him only, but for all those who love His appearing.'

EXTRACTS FROM A SERMON PREACHED AT OXFORD, 1872.

Chastisements Neglected Forerunners of Greater.

Therefore also now, saith the Lord, Turn ye even to Me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning; and rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God: for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth Him of the evil.—JOEL II. 12, 13.

WELL has this Epistle been chosen for this day, brethren, for surely it seems to us like an epistle written by Almighty God Himself, traced, not with pen or ink, or on tables of stone, but written in our hearts by His own finger, and the lines are of suffering and death. The prophet Joel is an awful yet tender preacher; prophesying of judgments to come, and teaching how, by the mercy of God, each judgment may be turned aside, from those judgments which he had then to announce, as just ready to burst upon that former people of God, until the Judgment of the Great Day. He speaks of no special sin for which the sufferings were sent, and so he warns against all sin: he speaks of the power which repentance has with God, without any

limit, and so he proclaims a Gospel message of universal forgiveness and release. This message he delivered to a nation whose present sufferings and future fears were like our own. Judgments yet heavier were gathering, and these were to burst, the one after the other, unless His people should take warning from the first, and repent with that true contrition of heart which has power with God. A heavy judgment of God was upon the land; there were fears of worse, and that worse the Prophet had to denounce, unless men repented. A grievous famine was already come; there was a wide desolation. Nature itself mourned unto its God. The irrational creation also bare the sin of man, and groaned, as it were, to God, who compassionates all sufferings, to whom all suffering is a mute cry, who hears the raven's cry, and of whom, the Scripture says, 'the lions ask their meat;' the Prophet calls his people not to be duller than the poor beasts, but to join as one man in one earnest cry to the tender mercy of God. He calls all, the very young and the very old, priests and people. Where thanksgiving was made at other times, 'between the porch and the altar,' now there must be sorrow; the priests were there to weep and intercede for the people. Those who had yet pure joy were to lay it aside; 'let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride from her bridal closet.' Even the children at the breasts were to be joined in the common sorrow, both to stir more deeply their parents' sorrow, and by their innocent distress to plead with God. For surely

no sorrow so calls forth the tender mercy of God as that of little ones whom His gracious Hands have just made, and who have not marred His work in themselves. In Nineveh, among those whom, He tells the Prophet, He could not but pity, were the 'sixscore thousand persons who could not discern between their right hand and their left.' None, then, were to spare themselves in the common sorrow: the very old, whose strength seemed gone, or the very young, who as yet had it not; those who suffered for their misery, and those who suffered not, by fellow-suffering were to form one common band who by united sorrow should prevail with God.

Else what was far worse was coming: 'The day of the Lord was nigh at hand, a day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness,'—darkness 'which could be felt,' coming suddenly, universally, and, if it came, hopelessly reaching every corner of the land; 'like the morning spread upon the mountains,' pervading all, penetrating all, enveloping all, like the light; only instead of light it would be darkness. And if the light were turned into darkness, how great that darkness! If the morning, which mitigates most suffering, itself brought sorrow, what other dawn was there? 'The day of the Lord is great, and very terrible, and who can abide it?' The evil to come is told in words which comprise much in one. Every judgment looks on to the end. Each, unless men repent, is a harbinger of another. When Israel

grievously sinned under Ahab, God said by Elijah: 'Him that escapeth the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay; and him that escapeth the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay.' More searching was the scourge which God raised up within them than the heathen scourge without; more awful the prophet by whom God says, 'I hewed them. I have slain them by the words of My mouth,' than the avenger by whom God destroyed all the worshippers of Baal. For the Prophet spake of the second death. So had the plagues of Egypt deepened in sorrow, until the Egyptians said, 'We be all dead men.' So had God in the law, when foreshowing and forewarning His people of the blessing and the curse, upon obedience or rebellion, how, if they would walk in His statutes, He would walk among them and be their God and they His people, added again and again the heavy sentence of an increasing doom, if they would not turn at His first chastisement. 'And if ye will not yet for all this hearken unto Me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins.' 'I will bring seven times more plagues upon you according to your sins.' And now again, as in a sort of sacred proverb, Joel declares how, on unrepented sins, God inflicted woe after woe, until the sinner turned to God or perished. Four armies of locusts, each of the later destroying what the former left, are the image of God's successive judgments, each rising in severity above the former, each leaving the sinner or the sinful nation more exhausted than before. He so attempers his

description as to include in it all the scourges of God, the irrational destroyer, and that far fiercer waster, man. Yet both successively do not exhaust the full meaning of the Prophet, for S. John says that their king is the angel of the bottomless pit, Apollyon, the destroyer (Rev. ix. 11). The Prophet declares how blow would follow upon blow, destruction upon destruction; the Apostle explains that among these scourges, permitted and overruled by God, there should be, in the Christian Church, not those who kill the body only, but destroyers of the soul. He himself declares the same principle of God's judgments. In that last book of prophecy which foretells the woes wherewith the Church shall be purified, and the world shall be punished, until the end, when four angels had sounded, yet another 'cried with a loud voice through the midst of the heavens, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth, by reason of the other voices of the trumpets of the three angels, which are yet to sound!' (Rev. viii. 13.) So when our Lord had foretold 'wars, famines, pestilences, earthquakes in divers places,' He adds, 'All these are the beginnings of sorrows,' the beginning of those birth-pangs which shall issue in the creation of 'a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.'

So, then, there is one law in the New Testament and the Old, in God's Kingdom of nature and of grace, with churches, and nations, and individuals,—that judgments come on slowly, in that long-suffering of God, yet successively; and these, if men repent not,

more and more deeply, until they end in the destruction of the sin or of the sinner. He shall find an end of escaping, when he hath not found an end of sinning (S. Matt. xvi. 3). And there is this difference between the prophecies of the New Testament and the Old: those of the Old are addressed to the persons under trial, and appeal to them: 'As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?' 'I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God; wherefore turn yourselves and live ye.' In the New Testament, prophecy surveys beforehand the sins of man, contains no call to repentance, but is the denunciation of the wrath of God, as it shall be successively, hopelessly, finally, poured out upon the impenitent.

And so, although living under grace, we turn back for comfort to the Old Testament, the history of God's Providence, there to read God's dealings with us when under His chastisements. It is the light of all other history, Christian or profane. It lifts the veil, and in it we see events, not following one another only, but marshalled by the Hand of God; not locusts only, or hail, devouring and destroying the fruit of the ground; or the sword, or famine, or the pestilence; but God bringing the locusts with His wind, casting forth the ice like morsels, or saying to the sword, 'Sword, go through the land.' We have before our eyes, not tens

of thousands only perishing by the pestilence, when David's heart was lifted up and he numbered the people, or the hundred and fourscore and five thousand of Sennacherib's army found dead in one night, just as he was 'shaking his hand against the mount of the daughter of Zion;' but the angel of the Lord standing with his sword drawn over Jerusalem, or going forth to smite the camp of the Assyrian. Again, we not only see that visitations, which men now speak of as events in nature, take place through the immediate and special appointment of God, but God, on occasion of them, what power He gives to prayer over Himself. We see God, at the word of His Prophet, shutting the heavens that it should not rain during the space of three years and six months; and again He tells us how, at the Prophet's prayer, 'the heavens gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit;' and how, at Moses' prayer, 'the thunder and the hail ceased, and the rain was not poured upon the ground,' and 'the Lord sent a strong west wind which took away the locusts; there remained not one locust in all the land of Egypt;' and when David offered sacrifice on Mount Moriah, the image of that spotless Sacrifice offered there, and in union with it, 'the Lord was entreated for the land, and the plague was stayed from Israel.' He tells us how Hezekiah's prayer obtained deliverance from Sennacherib, when pressing against the gates of Jerusalem. And now he points to the armies of the wrath of God, marshalled, swift, widespread, resistless, invulnerable,

speeding on in one unbroken, unentangled course, to execute His sentence; nothing can escape, nothing turns aside, nothing is fenced against them; they come (as an image of the Day of Judgment) suddenly, by surprise, 'like a thief;' heaven and earth quake before its terrors; all faces gather blackness. Yet even thus, in this last moment, the people are called to penitence; and then he promises that all evil should at once be swept away, all that was lost should be restored.

And so, in Christian times, have heathen armies, on prayer, been defeated by lightning and hail (the prayers of the Christian soldiers in the army of Marcus Antoninus) sent by Heaven against them; or they have been driven back from the walls of a helpless city (as Attila from Orleans, mentioned by Tillemont); earthquakes have been stopped at the cry of a whole people, 'Lord, have mercy' (as at Constantinople under Theodosius); pestilence has been arrested (as in the time of Gregory the Great); locusts have been swept back from the country which God had sent them to waste; and when this very city was desolated by the plague, its ravages abated from the day of united earnest prayer. And what other was it than the Hand of 'the Most High ruling in the kingdoms of men,' when, in our own days, half a million of soldiery, gathered by the scourge of Europe, rolled like a tide to destroy, and to establish an antichristian rule, and scarce a fragment returned? More were those slain by famine, and sudden, almost unheard-of, cold,

than those who were slain by the sword. Fire, frost, and cold fought against the enemy of God. (The fires of Moscow, and the cold 27 or 28 degrees below zero.)

God fought for us then, brethren! He exempted us from the scourge which wasted all Europe besides. He spoke to us in great mercy. Even when He would teach us to repent, He taught us rather by the sufferings of others than our own. We used to speak thankfully, how our land was spared the horrors of war. We suffered indeed by it, because we had at home the sorrows of the widow and the fatherless, but its most dreadful horrors reached us not. For nearly eight hundred years no war has reached this land but what our own passions kindled among ourselves. In a neighbouring land a form of Antichrist arose, and God taught us in the carnage there what our own ways would lead to. He said to us in them, 'Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.' He speaks to us the same words now; but the visitation of His displeasure is not near us only, it is upon us. Every judgment of God, until men, by final impenitence, exhaust it to themselves, and prove themselves unworthy of it, and incapable of amendment, is mercy. As individuals we feel that it is so. Woe is us, that we need so deep a wound; yet the deeper our sores, the more loving and merciful our Physician, who passed us not by, loathsome as we were in His holy eyes, nor cease to wound us until He reached the very depths of the sores which consumed our life. And what we know by experience as individuals, we believe

as a Church and nation, that His wounds are but to seal; unless through our own wilfulness we put away His healing hand, and make them incurable.

And so God's judgments have ever a twofold aspect of terror and of love—the cloud and the bow in it; yet the darkness is oftentimes so heavy that the portion of the bow which we see, though very bright, is very small. 'The thunder and lightning and rain' are upon us; the hope is for the time to come.

EXTRACTS FROM A SERMON PREACHED ON THE DAY OF HUMILIATION FOR THE IRISH FAMINE.

Winged Lions of Nineveh.

I saw in my vision by night.—DAN. VII. 2.

WINGED lions have been disinterred from the mounds which cover the temples and palaces of Nineveh; now, considering the close connection of Assyria and Babylonia, in worship, in language, in writing, in art, nothing could be less certain than that Babylon and Nineveh would not have had the same symbol of their empire, if either had had any known symbol at all. Both the lion and the eagle, as kings of birds and beasts of prey, were too obvious symbols to be characteristic of any one power. Twelve lions supported the arms of the throne of Solomon on its six steps. Both eagle and lion are used by Ezekiel as symbols of Babylon; the eagle was the standard of the Parthians and Persians; it was adopted by Alexander on his coins, and inherited by the Ptolemies; was used by the Romans after Marius; the two-headed eagle became the symbol of the Roman Empire of the east; it was assumed by the German

Empire; the black eagle is the standard of Prussia; the lion is emblazoned on the arms of England.

In the human-headed lion of the Assyrian monuments, the animating characteristic is the human countenance, —serene, majestic, intelligent, penetrating, benevolent; superhuman strength is there, but in entire repose; the majestic form, as beheld in front, is represented as motionless, its broad chest resting on its solid legs, side by side. The wings are portrayed as closely folded on its back, traced slightly upon it. All is subordinated to the human head; it seems almost to speak. The eye, by a bold design, stands forth from the head, as if even the cold stone could gaze; the benevolence of the rounded cheeks is heightened by the almost smile of the lips, the chin enveloped in the grave, solid beard. The rest of the massive figure gives one idea,—strength in perfect repose; the countenance, in its varied expression, is the soul of the whole. This is the more evident, because the expression in the human-headed lions and bulls is precisely the same. The animal symbol must have been altogether subordinate, because it varies, without varying in the least that expression of mind which arrests the gazer. When brute force is meant to be represented, it is figured in all its fierceness, as in the colossal lion, with vast, wide-opened jaws, found in one of the temples at Nimrud. It expresses devouring fierceness and rage, and these alone. Instead of that calm head are the vast jaws outstretched, as if ready to devour, and purposely dispro-

portioned for magnitude to the rest of the colossal figure, because the object was to express terrible fierceness.

No one can study these wondrous forms, the human-headed bulls and lions of Nineveh, and fail to see that they are both one symbol. Both are simply symbolic of strength; not of victorious strength, like a conquering empire; not of strength put forth, but simply of strength possessed. Both figures stand indiscriminately, or together, at the entrance of the Assyrian temples or palaces.

Very probably both the human-headed lions and bulls, and perhaps, conversely, the lion-headed men, were religious, not political symbols at all. Lions, bulls, and cherubim were on the bases in the court of Solomon's temple. Ezekiel saw in his vision by the river Chebar, four-faced creatures, each with the face of the lion, the bull, the eagle, the man, fulfilling God's *bidding*, going *whither the Spirit was to go, turning not when they went.* It seems most probable that the symbols of the powers of nature, including man's intelligence, which he saw around him, as entering into the heathen worship, he (Daniel) saw in his vision, subordinated to and fulfilling the will of God.

DANIEL THE PROPHET, p. 113.

Faith, God's Gift.

The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God.
1 Cor. II. 14.

To convince is the office not of man but of God. Gibbon enunciated a larger truth than he was aware of when, unable to see any escape from the contemporary evidence for a fact, or for its miraculousness, if it were true, he said, 'They all (all the witnesses of the fact) lived within the compass of a century; they all appeal to their personal knowledge or the public notoriety for the truth of a miracle which was repeated in several instances, displayed on the greatest theatre of the world, and submitted, during a series of years, to the calm examination of the senses. But the *stubborn mind of an infidel is guarded by a secret incurable suspicion*,' incurable save by God.

S. Paul had said the same thing before, 'The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God;' only it is man's own fault, if, encompassed with the Gospel, he remain in, or apostatise into, a state of nature. Yet to see (as I believe) a solid answer to those objections,

although it cannot give faith to one who has lost faith, may aid in beating off unbelief, or may predispose for faith, it may put a person in the position in which he will either not admit unbelief, or will seek for faith from Him who gives it to all who seek Him. It is not inquiry, but a non-inquiring acquiescence in doubt, which is the peril of this day. It costs much to disbelieve. It requires submission to our God and His grace to believe. The temptation of this age is to try to find a middle path between faith and unbelief; to say that 'there is much to be said on both sides;' to think that all things must be uncertain in themselves, because many of the persons around us are at sea as to all things, as if one thought all things to be in a whirl; because they seemed so to our neighbours who had dizzied themselves; to be browbeaten out of belief; to shrink from avowing a steadfast adherence to that which must be old because it is eternal, and which must be unchangeable because it is truth; to pick something out of revelation which, it thinks, will not be gainsaid, and to relegate all else to be matter of opinion;—an insolent, conceited, soft, weak, pains-hating, trifling with the truth of God.

It is not, for the present, a day of naked blasphemy; the age is mostly too soft for it. Voltaire's 'écrasez l'infâme' shocks it; yet I know not whether the open blasphemy of the eighteenth century is more offensive than the cold-blooded patronising ways of the nineteenth. Rebellion against God is not so degrading nor so de-

ceiving as a condescending acknowledgment of His Being while it denies His rights over us. Be not then imposed upon by smooth words. It is an age of counterfeits. Look not only at what is said, but look for what is suppressed and tacitly dropped out of the creeds. The rationalism of this day will give you good words as far as they go, but will empty them of their meaning; it will give as plausible a counterfeit as it can, but the 'image and superscription' is its own. It will gild its idols for you, if you will accept them for the living God. It will give you sentiment instead of truth, but at the price at which you are to surrender truth. It will praise Jesus as (God forgive it!), in fact, an enlightened Jew, a benefactor to mankind; and it will ask you in exchange to consent not to say that He was God. It will extol His superiority to Judaism, and include under 'Judaism' truths of God. It will praise His words as full of truth, and will call them, in a sense, Divine truths, and will ask you in exchange not to say that it is the infallible truth. It will say, in its sense, that 'the Bible *contains* the word of God,' and will ask of you in exchange to drop the words or at least the meaning of the creed, that God the Holy Ghost 'spake by the prophets.' It will say to you, 'that the prophets were elevated by a Divine impulsion,' and grant you 'an intensified presentiment,' but only in the sense common to the higher conditions of humanity, even unaided by the grace of God. It will acknowledge a fallible inspiration, fallible even as to matters of everyday morality,

and will ask of you to surrender the belief in the infallible. It will descant upon the love of God if you will surrender your belief in His awful holiness and justice. It will speak with you of heaven if you, with it, will suppress the mention of hell. It will retain the words of revelation, and substitute new meanings, if you will be content with the sound, and will part with the substance of the Word of God. The battle must be fought. It is half won when any one has firmly fixed in his mind the first principle, that God is All-wise and All-good, and that man's own wisdom, although from God, is no measure for the Wisdom of God, and cannot sound its depths. The criticism of rationalism is but a flimsy transparent veil, which hides from no eyes except its own (if indeed it does hide it altogether from its own) the real ground of its rebellion, its repugnance to receive a revelation to which it must submit in order that it may see.

You must make your choice. Let it be a real one. But before you choose, set before you that Day in which you shall see unveiled, all which you now see in part, and think what it will be to find, that they whom you adopted as teachers, taught you to ignore or deny or disbelieve, or accuse in the name of God, what is indeed the very truth of God. Even in this life those mists which hurry along so vehemently, so darkly, so impetuously, like hosts disarrayed, in yon tumultuous thronging and seemingly endless flight, part to the eye which watches well, and then opens to it the serene

depth of heaven in its own unchanging brightness; calm as ever beyond, uneffaced, undimmed, uninjured by the black earth-born clouds which roll so far below. Those glimpses, which by the gift of God come even in this world to the soul which resigns itself wholly to God in prayer, in meditation, in devout study of His Word, are earnests of the clearness of the eternal day. The Christian is as certain of the truth of what rationalism impugns as of his own existence. For God, who gave him his being, gave him also his faith. God did not reveal Himself that we should live in a twilight, seeing nothing of His truth distinctly, but only 'men as trees walking.' Twilight must brighten into full day, or darkens into the heaviness of night. To choose not to believe is to disbelieve. To halt between two divided ways is to reject God-given truth. 'If the Lord be God, follow Him: and if Baal, go after him.'

DANIEL THE PROPHET, p. 565.

The Angels.

All the host of heaven standing by Him on His right hand and on His left.—1 KINGS XXII. 19.

THE doctrine as to Angels, as contained throughout the Old Testament, previous to Daniel, is this: that there lives in the presence of God a vast assembly, myriads upon myriads of spiritual beings, higher than we, but infinitely removed from God; 'mighty in strength, doers of His word;' ever set 'to hear the voice of His word;' who ceaselessly bless and praise God; wise also; 'to whom He gives charge to guard' His own 'in all their ways; ascending and descending' to and from heaven and earth, and who variously minister to men, most often invisibly. But all (it was declared) are interested in us and our well-being. For when our earth was created, 'all the sons of God burst forth into jubilee' in prospect of our birth, who were to be their care here, their fellow-citizens hereafter in bliss. It was an anticipation of that we know more fully, that 'the Angels desire to look into' the mysteries of our salvation. At the giving of the law on Mount Sinai, they were present

in myriads. At that great manifestation of the goodness and condescension of God, how should not they be present who rejoiced at the creation of our race? Good beings must be interested in those capable of good, and in God's ways of forming them for Himself. When God vouchsafed His presence at Mount Zion, and the holy place became a new Sinai, 'twice ten thousand Angels, yea, thousands many times repeated,' were there. They are present with God, witnessing the trials of our race. On two occasions, when they 'presented themselves' before God, they heard of Job's spotlessness, and of the great trial of his faith. Job already, like the Apostles afterwards, was 'made a spectacle to Angels.' This trial of Job was the proving of one outside of Israel; their joy at our creation related to the human race. They were again present, and learnt how Ahab's false prophets would, by the intervention of a lying spirit, have power to deceive, to his destruction, Ahab, who wished to be deceived; Ahab and his prophets accomplishing, each of his own free-will, what was against their will. Their love for man shows itself in that, when God commanded them to destroy the guilty in Jerusalem, the charge is given to them: 'Let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity,' as though they would have pity, only that they must needs be of the same mind with God. It is in conformity with this, and an anticipation of the New Testament, that, in the prophecy of the Day of Judgment in Daniel, the myriads of the ministering spirits

are exhibited as standing round the Throne. Their office there, it was reserved to our Lord, the Judge, to declare; Daniel only declared their interest in it. The Day of Judgment of our whole race must needs unfold, even to those blessed spirits, more of the wisdom and love and justice of the Creator of us all.

Some distinction among those heavenly hosts was revealed from the first. It would be out of harmony with the manifold beauty and gradations in the rest of God's creation, if those higher orders of intelligent beings were of one kind only. At the closed gates of Paradise were the Cherubim. But chiefly there was one designated as '*the* angel of the Lord,' in whom God accustomed His creatures to the thought of beholding Himself in human form. Whether it were God the Son, who so manifested Himself beforehand (His Godhead invisible, as in the days of His flesh), or no, yet there was one known as 'the angel of the Lord,' distinct from and above all the rest. He speaks with authority, as the Lord; therefore the Lord, whether the Father or the Son or the Holy Ghost, was present with him, and spake by him; he is called, not as an epithet, but as a description of his being, 'the angel of the Lord,' therefore it seems to me most probable that he was a created angel. It seems most probable that the word *Angel* describes his actual nature, not the higher nature which spoke, or was adored in him. God spake 'by the Angel of the Lord' to Hagar, 'I will multiply thy seed exceedingly;' and she 'called the name of the Lord that spake unto her,

Thou God seest me.' 'The angel of the Lord' arrested Abraham in doing that which God had bidden him to do,—to offer Isaac his son. Angels of God's host met Jacob; but it was one to whom 'he made supplication,' and who 'blessed him,' and of whom Jacob said, 'I have seen God face to face. . . . By 'the angel of the Lord' God upbraided Israel in the time of the Judges: 'I made you to go up out of Egypt, and have brought you unto the land which I sware unto your fathers,' etc. 'The Angel of the Lord' pronounced the curse upon Meroz for unfaithfulness; and it disappears from history. Of this Angel, and of others with him, it seems to be said, 'The Angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them.' This then, in itself, involves a distinction among the heavenly beings, so far, at least, that in the earliest books, as well as in Daniel, we hear of one angel above those ordinarily spoken of.

In the Seraphim (probably *fiery* spirits), in Isaiah, and the Cherubim, we have other orders of spirits in their relation to God. Of these, the Cherubim are not mentioned to have any office of ministry to man, but having been placed, with symbols of terror, to prevent his return to Paradise, were objects of awe. The Seraphim are spoken of as engaged in ceaseless praise in great nearness to God, yet as concerned also about us below; for part of their song was, 'The earth is full of His glory' (Isa. iv. 3). One of them also was sent to Isaiah with the symbolic burning coal, which

was to cleanse his iniquity, and fit him for the seraphic mission of bringing good tidings to man.

In regard, then, to the greater dignity of some Angels above others, no addition is made in Daniel to what was known in the time of Abraham. We have alike, in Joshua and Daniel, the belief as to one spiritual being, to whom the charge and protection of the Jewish people was specially intrusted. In Daniel there is the name only of Michael above what was known before, and the name and being of Gabriel, both in common with the New Testament.

Such gradation, then, of heavenly beings as is implied in Daniel is in harmony with what had been revealed before. He sees one in great majesty, who gives directions even to Gabriel (Dan. viii. 16). It seems also that among those exalted intelligences some know more of the Divine purpose than others, and communicate that knowledge to others. Twice in these visions an Angel inquireth of that exalted Angel (who yet himself is a creature, for he swears by the living God), and receives an answer.

Both these relations of that one great Angel,—his special office for the people, and his superiority to other angels, — are mentioned by the prophet Zechariah. There, other Angels, 'whom God had sent to walk to and fro upon the earth,' gave account of their mission to 'the Angel of the Lord.' He stands as judge, surrounded by angels who fulfil his commands, hears the accusations of Satan, pronounces forgiveness to

Joshua the high priest, and in him to the people whom he represents.

The one fact as to Angels which is peculiar to Daniel is in harmony with his position in God's revelation. As he was employed to disclose God's care and providence over heathen nations, so through him it was disclosed, that as God set one chief Angel as the deputed guardian of His people, so He set others over other nations. It is in harmony with all which we know about those blessed spirits.

As we know that *all* of them are 'ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation;' as we know from our Lord's words (S. Matt. xviii. 10) and from the apostolic belief (Acts vii. 15) that each Christian at least is from childhood assigned to the care of his own guardian angel; so Daniel, declaring that the heathen also were the objects of God's care, taught, in the case of two great nations, Persia and Græcia, that they were under the care of eminent Angels, 'princes' with God. For the Angels of Persia and Græcia were manifestly good Angels, since they desired the welfare of their people. The interest of the heavenly beings in men had been revealed before. To Daniel it was made known as part of God's 'mercy over all His works,' that 'constituting the services of angels and men in a wonderful order,' He assigned to each nation one of those 'ministering spirits,' to succour and defend them, and plead their cause with Himself, the Father of all.

In the dream, in which Nebuchadnezzar was warned of the insanity which God was about to inflict on him unless he repented, there occur the remarkable words, 'The matter is the decree of the watchers,' the 'ever-wakeful' ministers of God, 'and the request is the word of the holy ones;' for which Daniel in his interpretation substitutes, 'This is the decree of the Most High.'

It appears from Daniel's advice to the king, that the sin for which that awful seven years' insanity was inflicted upon him, was that common sin of conquerors, unmercifulness and oppression. The word, 'the request,' gives another glimpse into the interest of the holy Angels in ourselves. They, too, longed that the oppression should cease; and, joining in the cry which is ever going up from the oppressed to the Throne of mercy and judgment, prayed for that chastisement which was to relieve the oppressed and convert the oppressor. But the statement, that it was a 'request,' precludes the supposition that the holy angels had any portion in the 'decree;' for to 'request' and to 'decree' relate necessarily to different parties. One who can 'decree' has no occasion to 'request,' nor does he.

All this, from the first book of the Old Testament to the last, is in harmony. Throughout, it was revealed that there were different orders of the heavenly beings. This is as clear in Genesis as in Daniel or Zechariah.

But any independence, whatsoever, of God, is, of course, radically at variance with any true conception of God. God is all, His creatures nothing, save what,

by His will, they hold from Him. This truth is guarded throughout the Old Testament. The very name 'angel' expresses that they are 'messengers' of God, a higher order of spirits, ministering according to His will to the lower man, or, like the Seraphim, they are seen in adoring love, about His Throne (Isa. vi.). Whether or no all heavenly beings have, at times, any office for man, yet nowhere in Holy Scripture does any, even the highest, so act, save as commissioned by God. They speak and act in His name.

DANIEL THE PROPHET, p. 517.

The Character of Daniel.

The spirit of the holy gods is in thee.—DAN. IV. 9.

THE character of Daniel himself was one and the same through the Book of Daniel,—majestic in its noble simplicity. As a revealer of God in a heathen court, and as raised to high dignity in God's Providence for the sake of his brethren, he occupies, in this temporary dissolution of the political existence of his people, a place somewhat corresponding to that of Moses at the beginning. Like Moses, he was educated in the highest wisdom of a people famed for its wisdom. Even this likeness has its unlikeness. In Moses, God manifested not His wisdom but His power. Yet, as the wise of the Egyptians were put to shame by the power of God wherewith He clothed Moses the shepherd, so He paled the reputation of the Babylonian Magi by His Spirit, which He placed in the captive boy Daniel. But the resemblance lies only in the common principles of God's Providence, whereby He, at extraordinary times, raises up, singly for the most part, extraordinary instruments of His own to effect His will. Man has but two

great gifts of God to direct against Himself, wisdom and power. The conflict must ever lie in these. In Joseph the slave, and Daniel the captive, God put to shame Egyptian and Babylonian wisdom, in that, through them, He taught their monarchs what their own wise men could not teach them.

The Book of Daniel gives but a slight hint that Daniel was formed through privation and suffering, in that, in his person, the prophecy of Isaiah to Hezekiah was fulfilled, 'Of thy sons which shall come from thee shall they take away, and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.' Thither, with several other Jewish youths, he, himself of royal blood, was taken while yet a boy, and placed in the care of the chief of the eunuchs. His name was changed, as well as those of his three chief companions,—a badge of servitude destined to obliterate the remembrance of their early home, and, in the case of these Jewish children, of their God. All of them had before borne names commemorative of their God:—'God is my Judge.' 'The Lord gave graciously.' 'Who is like God?' 'The Lord helpeth.' Two of these were changed into idol names, 'Servant of Nego,' and perhaps, 'Beltis preserve the prince;' anyhow, some compound of Bel. Nebuchadnezzar himself alludes to the signification and object of Daniel's new name, 'Daniel, whose name is Belteshazzar, after the name of my God.' He was probably now about fourteen. For Plato relates of the Persians, 'After twice seven years have

passed, those whom they call royal instructors receive the boy' to educate. The three years during which he was to be taught 'the learning and tongue of the Chaldeans,' would bring him to seventeen; but, according to Xenophon, sixteen or seventeen was the age of the adults, at which they entered upon the king's service. It was then, in boyish faithfulness to the law of his God, that he, about fourteen, refused the king's meats, which, as being connected with idol sacrifices, and the animal food thereof being killed with the blood, were forbidden to him by the law. Hosea's prophecy, 'They shall eat unclean things in Assyria,' shows how difficult it was to avoid them. God says, by Ezekiel, 'The children of Israel shall eat their defiled bread among the Gentiles, whither I will drive them.' It was part of that simplicity of boyish faith, which is the herald of future greatness, that, in uncompromising obedience to the law of his God, he, the soul of the action of his three companions, trusted that God would uphold his health and strength, as well through the pulse as through the forbidden food. He tells us that it was so as a simple fact.

But, whether God did unusually bless that meagre sustenance or no, boys do not foresee that, amid abstinence from the vices which surround them, God gives powers of mind and body, which others, through sinful indulgence, destroy in themselves. The faith was the same, in whatever way God answered it. In that same strong faith he, with his companions, obtained

from God that knowledge of Nebuchadnezzar's dream and its meaning, which saved him from death. In that same simple faith, in his advanced age, he continued, like the Psalmist, to pray three times a day, openly, when the penalty was the den of lions.

Yet, with this uncompromising duty to his God, he shows, where he may, a subject's deference. What respectful tenderness there is in that explanation of the dream, whereby Nebuchadnezzar's impending insanity was foreshown to the king. 'He sat astonied for one hour, and his thoughts troubled him.' The king had to encourage him to speak, so amazed was he at such reverse to such greatness. We almost hear the accents of tenderness and sympathy with which he spake. With what gentle words does he exhort him to those acts of mercy and righteousness, whereby the chastisement might yet be averted: 'Let my counsel be acceptable unto thee—if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity.' He longs that God may yet reverse the doom which he had to announce: 'The dream be to them that hate thee,' if, by mercy to man, the king would but place himself within reach of the mercy of God! To the impious Belshazzar he had to announce the imminent judgment of God. Yet then, too, with what longing remembrance does he look back to the days of Nebuchadnezzar, his greatness, glory, honour, humiliation, repentance! Human greatness is, when unabused, a majestic sight, for 'the powers that be are ordained of God.' They are reflections of His

supremacy. The greatness of Nebuchadnezzar was probably the more elevated, as being the first who changed the robber-tyrant domination of Assyrian or Babylonian might into organised rule. Daniel's admiration of that greatness (uniformly as the gift of God) shows itself alike in the explanation of his dream of that majestic statue which depicted his glory; in that of the hewn tree which betokened his extreme humiliation; and in the description of it to Belshazzar, when Nebuchadnezzar was with the dead, and his empire was within a few hours of its dissolution. The memory dwells in the mind of the aged seer, as of a glorious sight which had faded. Even of the weak king, who had let himself be entrapped into a law which constrained the condemnation of Daniel, he dwells on all the good side; his reluctance to execute the decree (which, perhaps, with safety to his throne, he could not recall), his sorrow at it, his ineffectual desire to evade it, his one night's repentance. They are few words of his own which he has preserved, but they are in the same gentle, respectful tone: 'Before thee also, O king, have I done no hurt.' Yet the love of his home and of the country which God had chosen for His people lived through all those of a lifelong absence and greatness. We see it in the aged man of fourscore and three years, streaming back in that life of sixty-nine years of exile. It is told us incidentally. But for the decree of Darius we should not have known of it. 'When Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into

his house; and, his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.' What a yearning for the dust of the city of his God does there lie in those two words, 'toward Jerusalem'! what a life of longing prayer in those closing words, 'as he did aforetime.' Yet he prayed 'toward Jerusalem,' not simply as his native land, but in memory of the prayer at the dedication of the Temple: 'If they shall bethink themselves, in the land whither they have been carried captives, and repent, and return unto Thee with all their heart, and pray unto Thee toward their land which Thou gavest unto their fathers, the city which Thou hast chosen, and the house which I have built for Thy name: then hear Thou their prayer, and forgive Thy people.'

That same earnest longing we see developed in that full and deep outpouring of his soul, when, in the first years of Darius, the seventy years of captivity were all but accomplished; we see the intensity of his love for the city of his God, which, with his bodily eyes, he was no more to see. We hear it in words, which now too express the yearning of the soul, longing for the restoration of one's country, or of the Church. One who could doubt their truth knows nothing of prayer, or of the voice of the soul. This love survived an unbroken political greatness of seventy years. The stripling of seventeen 'sat in the king's gate' ('in the Porte,' as we say, retaining the Oriental term), President over all the

Colleges of the 'wise men,' and of the whole province of Babylon. 'Daniel continued even unto the first year of King Cyrus,' are the simple words. But what a volume of tried faithfulness is unrolled by them! Amid all the intrigues, indigenous at all times, in dynasties of Oriental despotism, where intrigue too rolls round so surely and so suddenly on its author's head; amid all the envy towards a foreign captive in high office as a king's councillor; amid all the trouble incidental to the insanity of the king, or to the murder of his successors, in that whole critical period for his people Daniel *continued.* We should not have had any statement of his faithfulness, but for the conspiracy against his life under the new Median dynasty which knew not those past years. 'The president and satraps sought in vain to find' any occasion 'against him concerning the kingdom; forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him.' The picture is the greater, because the lines which mark it are so few, —they are a few simple touches of truth. It is the fact which is so eloquent. It is not the language of panegyric to say: 'Daniel continued even unto the first year of King Cyrus; Daniel was in the gate of the king; this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.' The force of the words is not drawn out; but, as perseverance is the one final touchstone of man, so these scattered notices combine in the grand outline of one, an alien, a captive, of that misused class who are proverbially the intriguers,

favourites, pests of Oriental courts, who revenge on man their ill-treatment at the hand of man; yet himself, in uniform integrity, outliving envy, jealousy and dynasties, surviving in untarnished, uncorrupting greatness the seventy years of the Captivity, honoured during the forty-three years of Nebuchadnezzar's reign; 'doing the king's business' under the insolent and sensual boy Belshazzar; owned by the conquering Medo-Persians,—the stay, doubtless, and human protector of his people during those long years of exile; probably commissioned to write the decree of Cyrus which gave leave for that long longed-for restoration of his people, whose re-entrance into their land, like Moses of old, he was not to share. Deeds are more eloquent than words. Such undeviating integrity, beyond the ordinary life of man, in a worshipper of the One God, in the most dissolute and degraded of the merchant cities of old, first minister in the first of the world-monarchies, was in itself a great fulfilment of the purpose of God in converting the chastisement of His people into the riches of the Gentiles.

To me Daniel's reserve about himself is most striking. A chief statesman in the first empire of the world, he has not recorded a single voluntary act of his own. Conceive any mere human writer occupying such a position as Daniel had, a chief adviser of a great monarch, and a great protector, doubtless, of his people, saying not one word of all the toils, plans, counsels of those seventy years, nothing of the good

which he furthered, or the evil which he hindered; and amidst this self-abnegating silence, what is the self-laudation (which by some) is attributed to Daniel? Literally this, that God gave him and his companions wisdom above the rest of the youths; that this was proved on their examination; that Daniel relates, in all simplicity, the queen-mother's account of the skill given to him by God in interpreting difficulties, which moved Belshazzar to send for him; that the envious presidents could find no crime whereof to accuse him; that the angel Gabriel thrice spake to him as 'greatly beloved.' If not fact, this were blasphemy, otherwise how differs it from that touching title by which S. John loves to call himself—'The disciple whom Jesus loved'?

DANIEL THE PROPHET, p. 15.

The Canon of the Old Testament.

Search ye out the book of the Lord, and read.—Isa. xxxiv. 16.

The account of the close of the Canon of the Old Testament, as given by those to whom the books themselves were intrusted, is very definite, and proceeds on a definite principle. Josephus says it was closed in the reign of Artaxerxes, son of Xerxes, and that because the succession of prophets closed then. 'With us,' he says, in contrast to the contradictions of Greek history, 'there are not myriads of books, inharmonious and conflicting, but two-and-twenty books only, containing the records of the whole time, and rightly believed to be Divine. Of these, five are those of Moses, which comprise as well the matters of law as the account of the generations of man, to the time of his death. This period is little short of 3000 years. But from the death of Moses to the reign of Artaxerxes, the king of Persia after Xerxes, the prophets after Moses wrote what was done in their times in thirteen books. The four remaining books contain hymns to God, and suggestions to men as to their lives. From Artaxerxes down to our own times,

events have been recorded, but they have not been accounted worthy of the same credit as those before them, because the exact succession of prophets existed no longer. And it is evident, indeed, how we stand affected to our own writings. For, so long a period having now elapsed, no one has dared either to add or to take away from them, or to change anything, it being a thing implanted in all the Jews from their first birth, that they should account them as oracles of God, and abide by them, and, if need were, gladly die for them.'

The unchangeable adherence of the Jews to the Old Testament, that wonderful faith, which has for 1800 years since, in the main, characterised their nation, is stated thus by Philo, a Jew of a very opposite character to that of Josephus: 'They change not even a word of the things written by Moses, but would rather endure ten thousand deaths than be persuaded to what is contrary to his laws and customs.'

The date at which the Jews, in the time of Josephus, believed the Canon of their Scriptures to have been closed, was about four centuries before the birth of our Lord. Josephus probably fixed on the reign of Artaxerxes, as being the period of Nehemiah's great work of restoration, although the actual closing of the Canon probably took place during the second visit to his country, the probable date of the prophet Malachi, under the son and successor of Artaxerxes, Darius Nothus. The period which lay between was a long one. Yet it was a period of the most active human

intelligence. It reached back into no ages really or hypothetically 'dark.' Socrates was a contemporary of Malachi; the source of the two philosophies which have influenced the world was of the same date as the last of the Hebrew prophets. Better might we suppose the Greeks ignorant as to the dates of their philosophers, than imagine the Jews, to whom the Word of God was dearer than life, ignorant as to the date of their prophets. The term, however, was measured by something besides years. Josephus speaks of it as a period of mental activity in Judæa. 'From that time down to our own events were recorded, but they have not been accounted worthy of the same credit as those before them.' This describes a portion of the deutero-canonical books of the Old Testament; books held in estimation among the Jews as well as by Christians, but not received by the Jews into their canon, because Israel had no more prophets who had authority to receive them.

The close of the Pentateuch contains a solemn account, with what earnest protest Moses, when ready to depart, delivered the law 'to the priests, the Levites, and all the elders of the people,' to be read publicly at the Feast of Tabernacles in the seventh year, the year of release, when hearts would be gladliest. Besides this public gift and public use, Moses gave a copy of it to be laid up by the side of the ark. 'Moses commanded the Levites, who have the ark of the covenant of the Lord, saying, Take this book of the law, and place it at the side of the ark of

the covenant of the Lord your God,' and it shall 'be a witness against you.' It was deposited there not as a near place of safety, but close by the place of the typical atonement for sin, 'The ark of the covenant,' as the protest against the national breach of that covenant by idolatry. There was yet further the provision that the king when he should come to the throne should 'write for himself a copy of this law in a book, from that which is before the priests, the Levites, and it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life.' This book, it is plain from the Pentateuch itself, was not a section only of it, but the whole. In regard to Amalek, Moses is commanded, 'Write this for a memorial *in the book*, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua.' Moses 'took *the book* of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people.' The curse is threatened to Israel, 'If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law that are written in this book.' To this book Joshua added, as is stated clearly at the close of his book, 'Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of the Lord.'

Samuel, again, when he had 'told the people the law of the kingdom, *wrote it in the book*, and laid it up before the Lord;' on the same ground on which Moses had so laid up the law, as a memorial against its infraction.

So also as to the books of the prophets. Isaiah bids his people, 'Search ye out of the book of the law, and read.'

The use of the law by the prophets, and of the earlier prophets by those who succeeded them, implies the same thing. It has been pointed out how prophets of Israel, Hosea and Amos, appeal to or presuppose the law of Moses as well known in the schismatic kingdom of Israel, and so, how certain it is, that the law, as contained in the Pentateuch, was an existing authority which Jeroboam could not shake off, but had to adapt his corruption of religion as well as he could to it. It has been pointed out, too, how the citations of each earlier prophet by those who came after, presuppose that those former books were of recognised authority. Amos, when he opens and almost closes his prophecy with words of Joel, or applies more extensively those of Hosea, intends manifestly to carry on a message already recognised as Divine. So also Obadiah, when he uses words of the prophecies of Balaam, Joel, Amos, and a Psalm. Micah alludes emphatically to those parting words of his great predecessor in the book of Kings, to expressions of the Psalms and Proverbs, to Joshua, to David's elegy over Saul and Jonathan, as well as to the Pentateuch; Hábakkuk, Zephaniah, Ezekiel, employ words or thoughts of his. Jonah, by adopting the form 'And' joins on his prophetic history to the sacred histories before him, and blends his mission to the heathen with the history of the people of God.

When, then, Daniel, studying Jeremiah's prophecy of the seventy years of the Captivity, says, 'I understood

by the books,' *i.e.* the *biblia*, scriptures, 'the number of the years, which the word of God was to Jeremiah the prophet, to fulfil as to the desolations of Jerusalem, seventy years,' this exactly expresses what we see from the writings of the prophets before the Captivity to have been the fact, that the books of the prophets were collected together.

The Captivity set God's seal on the true prophets of God over-against the false prophets, and gained a reverence for them among those also of the people who had derided, and persecuted, or slain them before. The 'former prophets' is a standing expression for the prophets before the Captivity.

The historical books were at all times an essential part of the teaching of Israel. They were a mirror in which God exhibited to them in act, in their own history, what in the law He had taught them in word, the fruits of obedience and disobedience to Himself. Much as the several series of histories vary in their character, this line runs through them and holds them in one, as, outwardly too, they are joined on together. Their difference of character marks their independence; the unity of design marks one guiding principle.

On ground of language, the book of Joshua must have been very early. On historical grounds, the books of Joshua and Judges must have been written before the time of David, the Judges probably by Samuel.

The two books of Samuel were completed probably soon after the death of David. They are far separated

from the book of the Kings by the language, as well as by the style of the narrative. You must all have felt the difference between the full, almost biographical, character of the books of Samuel, and the brief extracts in the Kings, from the fuller histories of the kings of Israel and Judah. The books of Kings, with a very few characteristic exceptions, close the reigns of the kings both in Israel and Judah, with the reference to the larger chronicles of the respective kingdoms. The book of Ruth contains no mark of its date. It is most likely to have been written when the memory was most fresh. The only custom which is related, that of giving the shoe in witness of a covenant, belongs to a very simple time, and may well have fallen into desuetude soon after David's time. The language has this remarkable characteristic, that the forms occur in conversation, and so represent the language of peasant life. The history itself took place a century before David. The right of kindred in redeeming the land is a Levitical law; the custom that such redemption in the case of a childless widow involved marriage with her, is something beyond, not against, the Levitical law; for the deceased had no brothers left.

The books of Kings close with the life of Jehoiachim, whom Evil-Merodach took out of prison in the thirty-seventh year of his captivity. He was then in his fifty-fifth year. It seems probable that he died within the two years of the reign of Evil-Merodach, since it is said that the king, *i.e.* Evil-Merodach, gave him a daily allowance

all the days of his life. The kings of Judah had become a short-lived race. In this case, the last event of this book falls about B.C. 559, the restoration of Jehoiachim being, as an act of kindness, a mitigation of their captivity twenty-two years before its close. The manner and language of the books fall in with the Talmudic tradition that the books of Kings were written by Jeremiah. This, however, was but the completion of what in substance existed long before. The basis of the present books was, from the time of Samuel, furnished by contemporary prophets. The history of David was written by three,—Samuel, Nathan, Gad; that of Solomon by Nathan, Ahijah, Ye'di; Rehoboam's by Shemaiah and Iddo; Jehoshaphat's by Jehu, son of Hanani; Uzziah and Hezekiah's by Isaiah; Manasseh's by Chosai. These, it is clear, were incorporated in the book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel and Judah, so often referred to in the books of Kings.

The Psalms, being intended for devotional use in the Temple, must have been early collected. They were needed for that vast elaborate system of instrumental and vocal music which David instituted, setting apart 4000 Levites 'to praise the Lord with the instruments which I made,' said David, 'to praise therewith.' The office of those set over them was to 'prophesy with harps,' to give thanks, and 'to praise the Lord.' The large proportion of Psalms left anonymous is a proof of the conscientiousness of the collector in not adding doubtful names.

The five Halleluiah Psalms, with which the book closes in one varied thanksgiving, all mourning done away, and even prayer for the time absorbed in praise, suits no time so well as the completed restoration under Nehemiah, when the Lord 'built up Jerusalem,' and 'strengthened the bars of her gates.'

The book of Proverbs also bears evidence of gradual collection.

In no one of these books is there anything which requires a date later than that which Josephus probably meant to fix, the date of Malachi, and the second visit of Nehemiah.

DANIEL THE PROPHET, p. 249.

Belief in Man's Immortality.

I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.—EXOD. III. 6.

MAN'S creation for immortality was, according to Holy Scripture, contained in the history of his creation. His creation in 'the image of God, after His likeness,' in itself involved his immortality. All created good is some reflex of its archetype in the infinity of its Maker's mind. Man alone, of all created things in this our world, was formed in the image and likeness of *Himself*. He bore in himself that for which, when it had been defaced by the fall, he has been reborn in Christ, the 'image of the heavenly.' But in that he was created in the image of God, he must needs have in himself created gifts corresponding to the all-perfect attributes of God. Man had then, as endowments wherewith he was created, reason, intelligence, imagination, beauty of soul, justice, goodness, righteousness, love, immortality, as a sort of created reflection of the infinite wisdom, beauty, goodness, justice, righteousness, eternities of eternal love, which is God. Everything else may in

the end be lost; every gift of grace, even the capacity of grace, may in the end be obliterated; everything good, wherewith he was endowed, may be forfeited for ever, in the endless separation from God in hell. Immortality alone must remain; and man is conscious of his immortality, because immortality is of the essence of his being. Thence, doubtless, is that almost inextinguishable belief in his own immortality, however perverted the forms of that belief may have often become.

And when he fell, and the 'image of God' was defaced in him, and his 'likeness' was obscured, the sentence pronounced upon him at once implied that death was not his original portion, and that God willed to restore him to life. In that sentence, 'Until thou return unto the ground, for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return,' it lay that even his body was not originally formed to be dissolved. For the death of the body would not have been pronounced as the sentence on his sin, had it been God's purpose for him if he had not sinned. The truth of the apostle's words, 'By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned,' lay in the sentence of God upon Adam. And so again that first Gospel, the promise of 'the Seed of the woman' who should 'bruise' the serpent's head, in itself implied man's immortality. For the victory over the serpent would not have been complete unless man had been restored to what he was before. It would have been nothing to him if he had

not been immortal. What of Adam was earthly returned to the earth, and no redemption was wrought, no victory won. Then, since God's will is true, its accomplishment lay beyond, and Adam, for whom it was to be wrought, still lived, though unseen.

This belief was expressed by the Patriarchs, as S. Paul develops their meaning, when they said that they were 'strangers and pilgrims on the earth.' The saying was applied in the law, that each generation had but a life-hold property in the promised land: 'The land is Mine, for ye are strangers and sojourners with Me' (Lev. xxv. 23). The much-containing phrase, 'sojourners with God,' itself lived on. David took up the word. It still expresses our Christian hopes; we use his words in parting for a while with those we love. For they who are 'sojourners with' God here undoubtedly abide with Him for ever. The term in itself expresses that they who used it 'looked for a better country,' their everlasting home with *Him* with whom they now were sojourners. So David, in the same Psalm, confessing man's frail condition at his best estate here, owned forthwith where his own longing expectation lay: 'And now, what look I for, O Lord? my longing expectation is in Thee.'

The doctrine of life after death lay, for thoughtful minds, in the continued relation of God to the Patriarchs, expressed in the title, 'I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob,' by which God revealed Himself anew to Israel

in Egypt. For our Lord would not have blamed the Sadducees so severely, 'Ye therefore do greatly err,' unless, through their own fault, they remained ignorant of what they might have known. 'God,' our Saviour adds, in explanation of its meaning, 'is not the God of the dead, but of the living.' He said not, 'I have been,' but, 'I am the God of Abraham,' etc. God (it lay in the words) took no transient care of those who were His; He, the Unchangeable, could not be named from something so fleeting as man's visible existence here; He, the All-good, did not enter into a relation to His creature only, of His own accord, Himself unforsaken, to end it; He, the Self-communicating, the Fountain of Life, did not leave without some portion of His life those for whom He deigned to stand in so close communion; they who lived to Him lived in Him, and by Him, and they who lived by Him could not wholly die; so, then, Abraham, the real Abraham, could not be simply that form of earth which was to return to the earth, although that also was a part of Abraham, and therefore, in the fact of the life of Abraham was involved, not only a continuance of life after death, but a resurrection from the dead. God would not be called the God of the fishes of the sea, or of the fowls of the air, or of any of His irrational creation, although they were all the work of His hands, and He preserves them all; nor the God of the wicked, although He was yet merciful unto them, since one day they would cease to have any portion of Him,

and had now withdrawn themselves from Him; but only of His saints and of the Holy Hosts of heaven. His interest in those He loves continued still after they were gathered to their fathers, and was continued on to their children; yet He took not an interest in that which was not. All this, and far more, lay in those deep, simple words: 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob.'

The belief in reunion after death lies also in the varied expressions of the association of the soul by death with those who had gone before. It was said first in the form of a promise, 'Thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace' (Gen. xv. 15). Of Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, it is said, he 'was gathered unto his people,' words which do not intend a reunion of the bodies in a common burial-place,—for Abraham was not buried with his fathers, nor was Ishmael, and Jacob speaks of it as something distinct from his burial: 'I am gathered unto my people; bury me with my fathers.' It means, also, more than a common lot of death. It speaks of the 'I,' and of a congregation into which each 'I' should be received, the assembly of those who had been parted with out of sight for a time, but with whom, through death, he should be joined. David's comfort of himself, as to his child, 'I shall go to him,' implies the same belief of personal reunion. The latter language, 'he slept with his fathers,' contained the same truth.

The impression made by the history of Enoch, that

, God took him,' is marked by the repetition of the word as to the ascension of Elijah (2 Kings ii. 3-5). The same word expressed the faith of the Psalmists, the sons of Korah and Asaph, and the faith so expressed entered thenceforth into the public worship. From the time of David, Israel drank in that faith in their devotions. The rule of prayer was the rule of faith. They confessed it as we do, in their prayers to God, and what we confess with our lips God works into our hearts by the gifts of faith and of certain knowledge!

The subject of the 49th Psalm is the different lot of the brutish who live for this world, as if it were their everlasting dwelling-place, and that of those whose portion is God. As to both, the Psalmist sees beyond the grave; the worldling living in his thoughts, by a sort of posthumous immortality, but in vain. The worldlings will be with Death for their shepherd, the godly will be with God. The Psalmist also seems to speak of the meeting of the righteous and the wicked after this first severance, a Morning yet to come after the night of death, the great resurrection-morning, '*the* Morning' which has no evening; when there shall be the great reversal of men's judgment; 'the righteous shall have dominion over them.' Then they, not the wicked, should have the pre-eminence.

Yet more marked is the 73d Psalm, because the prosperity of the ungodly had taken more hold of the Psalmist, and because it was in 'the sanctuary of God' that he found his answer. The end of the ungodly is

evil, sudden destruction, and that end, like that of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, coming upon an evil life is the earnest of an evil hereafter. If this life were all, it were all one how it ended. The Psalmist saw beyond the contempt to which they should awaken: 'As a dream when one awaketh, O Lord, in the Awakening Thou shalt despise their image,'—their vain, unsubstantial being, since it was void of God, a vain show, 'full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.' What God despises must be full of contempt, and so Asaph forestalls Daniel's words, 'Some shall rise to shame and everlasting contempt.' On the other hand he sums up the past, present, future of the godly: 'I am continually with Thee; Thou hast holden me by my right hand, Thou shalt guide me by Thy counsel, and after receive me into glory.' The 'after' when God's guidance is past can be no other than the great *hereafter;* the word 'receive me' is the appropriated term for our 'take unto Himself.' But the ground of this assurance lies deeper than the assurance itself. And so it sheds its light over much of Holy Scripture besides. Its ground is that same ground which our Lord pointed out in the title, 'God of Abraham.' God was the Psalmist's own God, and so He could not fail him. All which God had been to him, all which He was, He must be for ever, for He is unchangeable. It is an inner revelation such as heathenism could not know, because it could not know of union with God, that God could make Himself belong to the soul, as He had made the soul His own.

'Whom have I in heaven?' None had he, save God. But then God, in all that wide heaven, was his. 'And with Thee,' together with Thee, and so, having Thee, 'I have no delight on earth.' In God he had all, and he desired nought besides. But then He who was so his must be his for ever. 'My flesh and my heart faileth,' *i.e.* though flesh and heart be consumed, 'God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever!' 'For ever!' Not then for this little span of life only. Union with God is a pledge of immortality. But then every child of Israel who had learned the truth of that Psalm, 'O God, Thou art my God,' had in him the assurance of a deathless, unbroken unitedness with God.

Besides these passages in the Psalms, which directly express in words the belief in the life to come or the resurrection, there is also much language which implies it. Look at the doings or gifts of God which, the early Psalms say, will be 'for ever.' 'Your heart shall live for ever.' 'Thou settest me before Thy face for ever.' 'Thou gavest him length of days for ever and ever.' 'Thou hast set him a blessing for ever.' Or reciprocally, 'I trust in the tender mercy of God for ever and ever. I will praise Thee for ever.' Or again, 'The fear of the Lord endureth for ever.' An immortality of praise implies an immortality of being. The endless abiding of the reverence of God involves that they too, who so revere Him, shall abide alway. Again, 'In Thee is the fountain of life: and in Thy light shall we see light.' What can it mean, but that when we shall be plunged

into that Ocean of Light which God is, all darkness shall cease? then, admitted to Himself, the Fountain of Life, we shall see in Him what on earth we never saw, the true eternal Light. What is this but the vision of God? Or when a son of Korah says, 'This God is our God for ever and ever; He Himself will be our Guide over death,' what is death but a mere point in our everlasting relation to Him, over which He Himself, like a tender Shepherd, leads us? Or when, in the sight of the fruitlessness of all worldly pursuits and aims, he asks God to teach him his end, unless he saw therein what was beyond that end, even Him of Whom in that same Psalm he says, 'My longing is for Thee'? David's words express our Christian hopes. We whose hopes they express cannot think they meant less to David, whose hope they first fed.

David knew also of a judgment of the world. But since the inhabitants of this world are ever in one flux, some going, others replacing them, the judgment of the world implied a resurrection of the world, the great meeting of all before the judgment-seat of God.

The great passage in the book of Job is a confession intended for all times:—'Oh that my words were written! Oh that they were engraven in a book! were cut with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever!' Their most literal translation is:—

> 'And I, I know that my Redeemer liveth,
> And that, the last, He shall arise upon the dust;
> And after my skin, they have destroyed this *body*,

> And from my flesh I shall behold God,
> Whom I, I shall behold for myself,
> And mine eyes shall behold, and not another:
> My reins are consumed within me.'

No doubtful meaning of any words can efface from the passage the doctrine of the resurrection of the flesh. After all criticism this remains, that Job looked forward to a manifestation of his Redeemer at the end with power, whether on the earth, or over his own dust specially: that he knew that he himself, for himself, should gaze upon his God; and that, after the destruction of his body, he should, with the eyes of his flesh, behold Him.

Hosea and Isaiah carry on the triumph over death and the grave in terms so large and so absolute that S. Paul had no greater words wherewith to conclude his solemn hymn of victory—wherein he reverses, one by one, the temporary triumphs of the grave over our poor bodies—than the jubilant exultation of the two prophets, 'Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?' Hosea's words of triumph followed upon the most absolute declaration on the part of God, 'I will ransom them from the hand of the grave; I will redeem them from death.' The words of Isaiah go even beyond the resurrection. Death, the destroyer, is destroyed for ever.

Isaiah, like Daniel, foretold the resurrection of the good and bad; only, that the good alone should rise to

joy. As the dew quickens the vegetation which lies so parched and dead, so the life-giving power of God, which the Psalmist calls directly 'His Spirit,' should quicken those so long dead.

But in one respect Isaiah has more than Daniel, for he foretells the judgment, not only of all on the earth, but of those higher beings 'who kept not their first estate:'—

> 'The Lord shall punish the host of the height in the height,
> And the kings of the earth upon the earth;
> And they shall be gathered in a gathering, prisoners down to the pit,
> And shall be shut up in prison;
> And after many days shall they be visited;
> And the moon shall be ashamed and the sun confounded;
> For the Lord of hosts reigneth on Mount Zion,
> And before His ancients gloriously.'

The 'host of the height' is contrasted with the 'kings of the earth,' as in Daniel 'the army of heaven' with 'the inhabitants of the earth.' Each is to be punished in the place of their sin. Both are to be kept in prison until a visitation, after a long period, as S. Peter, 'God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment.' Then in the brightness of the Eternal Presence, before which sun and moon shall pale, follows the blissful nearness of the righteous in glory.

The prophecy in Daniel, 'some shall awake to shame and everlasting contempt,' lies already in Isaiah, 'They

shall go forth, and look upon the carcases of the men that have transgressed against Me; for their worm shall not die; neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring of all flesh.'

The great passage of Ezekiel, with its thrilling and minuteness of description of the bones, 'exceeding many and exceeding dry,' which at God's word 'came together, bone to his bone,' and were covered 'with sinews, flesh, skin, and the breath came into them, and they lived and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army,'—implies the current belief of the resurrection of the flesh the more, because the application is figurative, and is made to strengthen a disheartened people. 'Never,' says S. Jerome, 'would the likeness of the resurrection be used in order to signify the restoration of the people of Israel, unless the resurrection itself stood firm and was believed as to be; for no one confirms things uncertain through things which are not.'

We may make the case our own. To a Christian no future of the Church is so certain as the resurrection of the flesh. To us, an assurance on God's part, that any future good condition of the Church would as surely be as the resurrection of the flesh, would be most reassuring, on the ground of our certain knowledge of that doctrine. So then to the Jews also.

DANIEL THE PROPHET, p. 496.

Belshazzar.

Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand.—DAN. V. 1.

THE insolence of Belshazzar in desecrating the sacred vessels in a festival in honour of his gods is nothing strange. Excited by wine, he would triumph over God, as the Philistines did when they placed the ark in the temple of Dagon. It is far less strange than the recklessness with which, in the wantonness of party spirit, the sacred vessels of the altar have been used to adorn the sideboards of wealthy courtiers, or, in a time of political animosity against the Church, fonts have been turned into horse-troughs. Nor is it strange that the insolent and selfish boy-king troubled not himself to know of Daniel, but 'following,' as S. Jerome says, 'the old and inworn error of his race, "called the astrologers and Chaldeans and soothsayers," not the prophet of God;' or that Daniel, so neglected, did not appear, uncalled, with the wise men, when he would not be listened to if he spoke contrary to them, but reserved himself until some opening should dispose the king to

listen to him; or that Belshazzar, when the queen-mother had circumstantially reminded him of the supernatural wisdom which had been found in Daniel, in the days of Nebuchadnezzar, should have remembered so much of him, that his father had brought him from Judæa. Daniel's Hebrew name, which Nebuchadnezzar (the queen-mother had reminded Belshazzar) had changed after the wont of conquerors, suggested his Jewish origin. All the rest Belshazzar professed to have been told. The accurate distinction has more the air of truth. Every one knows how one little circumstance will awaken a whole train of forgotten histories of the past. Nor again, bound, as kings ever held themselves to be, to fulfil at least the letter of their public promises, that in that night, which Belshazzar knew not to be his last, he fulfilled his promise to him who should read the mysterious writing. Let objectors place themselves in the circumstances of that night. Let them imagine it (what as unbelievers, they must) mesmerism, or whatever else they dare, but let them imagine the ungodly revelry and triumph over God, broken at once by a sight seemingly supernatural, the man's hand writing characters which no one could decipher; we may suppose them the old Hebrew character, which would naturally be unknown to the wise men of Babylon. Let them picture to themselves the confusion of the revellers, impressed, at the height of their idolatrous pride, with a sense of the supernatural which it baffled all the wisdom of the wise to

explain; the increasing terror at the failure; that sudden reverse, which changes presumptuous triumph into prostrate fear; the calm reassuring words of the queen-mother, speaking with dignity and authority of the respect of the great departed king for Daniel, as endowed with a mysterious presence of the gods in whom he believed; and then let them view, amid that scene of broken revelry, the silver-haired prophet of above fourscore years, alone, standing fearless when all feared, the one surviving witness of the departed greatness of their empire, almost as a denizen of another world, since all of his generation had long been numbered with the dead, indifferent as to greatness, regardless of the king's displeasure, speaking words of forceful truth, explaining unhesitatingly, in the name of his God, the hitherto inexplicable words, and announcing a doom founded on the just retribution of God, to which the heart of man, in its secret depths, responds, —granted, for the time, the supernatural, all the rest is in most perfect harmony with it. Nor is it in the least inconsistent that Daniel should have declined the king's honours, when offered to him as a bribe, and that, when his strict, because truthful, message had been listened to, he should have accepted the short-lived honour in the departing kingdom, which might the rather prepare the conqueror to listen to his words in the name of his God.

It was a grand theatre on which Daniel then stood. On the one side was the world-wide monarchy, irresis-

tible, conquering, as the heathen thought, the God of the vanquished. On the other, a handful of the worshippers of the One Only God, captives, scattered, with no visible centre of unity, without organisation or power to resist, save their indomitable faith, inwardly upheld by God, outwardly strengthened by the very calamities which almost ended their national existence, for they were the fulfilment of His word in whom they believed. Thrice, during the seventy years, human power put itself forth against the faith; twice in edicts, which would, if obeyed, have extinguished the true faith on earth; once in direct insult to God. Faith, as we know, 'quenched the violence of fire, stopped the mouths of lions.' In all three cases the assault was signally rolled back; the faith was triumphant in the face of all the representatives of the power and intelligence of the empire; in all, the truth of the one God was proclaimed by those who had assailed it. Unbelief, while it remains such, must deny all the miracles and all superhuman prophecy. But, if honest, it dare not designate as 'objectless' miracles which decided the cause of truth on such battle-fields.

Nor was Daniel's position any slight mitigation of the captivity, or any slight protection of his people. Let any one imagine a Christian as devoted to God as Daniel, and with that same love to his people which that great prayer indicates, first minister at the Ottoman Court. The change which he would readily imagine in the condition of the Christians, 'now made like the

dust by threshing,' may enable him to picture to himself the benefits which Daniel's office yielded to his people. Each miracle resulted in a decree in favour of the Jews. The miraculous and the ordinary history are in harmony. Further, it is most probable that the release of the Jews was one consequence of these miracles. The miracles stand connected in a chain. The superhuman knowledge shown to Nebuchadnezzar was the ground why Daniel was called in on that last night of Belshazzar. His reading of the handwriting, and the office which he occupied in consequence, were his first commendation to Darius. The restoration of his people was doubtless the fruit of his influence with Darius and Cyrus. Their restoration was no part, apparently, of the original plan of Cyrus, because he who could have done it with a word, did it not. It was no deep plan of human policy; because, two years after he had granted the permission, he restrained his favour ungraciously, persuaded by his councillors. His decree runs: 'The Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of earth; and hath charged me to build Him an house at Jerusalem.' The facts of sacred history accord with this. Daniel was accredited to Darius by the events at the close of the kingdom of Babylon; he was accredited personally to Darius by his known *innocency*, and by his supernatural deliverance. Darius issued a decree commanding that men should reverence the God of Daniel. Daniel himself prospered in the reign of Darius and of Cyrus. Daniel, then, in high

favour at the court, accredited the unknown prophecy of Isaiah, which must have been shown to Cyrus, for his decree in favour of the Jews evinces belief in it. Thus the living authoritative speaker gains admission for the unknown written word. As the history stands in Daniel, Cyrus had reason to trust Daniel; he had no reason to trust any ordinary Jew who could show the, to him, unknown oracle. Daniel showed it to him, and Cyrus acted upon it.

DANIEL THE PROPHET, p. 450.

Miracles not Wasted on the Heathen.

God is loving unto every man, and His mercy is over all His works.—Ps. cxlv. 9.

In Babylon God showed in acts, what prophecy all along declared, that He was not a God of the Jews only. Nor were they wasted. It is said, 'Nebuchadnezzar had ever to be converted anew.' Alas! if man's waste or forgetfulness of God's goodness were to be a proof that God had never shown it, then we must disbelieve that God has ever shown any mercies of His Providence or His grace to our own bad selves, which yet we, each of us, know that He has. But, although Nebuchadnezzar's two great convictions of the greatness of the God of the Jews faded in time, we know of no relapse after the last. God triumphed at last, and won Nebuchadnezzar, as He does so many relapsing Christians. There is no reason to think that the aged Darius ever went back from his conviction. The revelation to Belshazzar was the open temporal judgment on one who had despised God's known dealings. 'Thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled

thy heart, though thou knewest all this; but hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven.'

Belshazzar had forgotten Daniel; he had *not* forgotten God's ways with Nebuchadnezzar; but, like too many so-called Christians, he despised known truth. We know that God's judgment was fulfilled. We do not know that it was wasted even on him. Yet they are not the great of this world, who are mostly converted to God. Many of those thousands of souls, who were assembled in that plain of Dura, may have been won to the belief of the One true God; many, at Belshazzar's revelry, may have been awed towards God, before they slept their death-sleep; many hearts may have been reached through Nebuchadnezzar's affecting account of his humiliation, or awed into forbearance towards His people by the edicts of Nebuchadnezzar and of Darius. 'Many hearts may have been reached,' did I say? They who, like the German critics, come to know of the history of Daniel, simply as a matter of criticism or of unbelief, may look on that great history as a matter which could at most affect the then generation, and think that the doings of God failed, because Belshazzar had turned a deaf ear to God's warnings to Nebuchadnezzar. We, most of whose minds must have been arrested in our childhood or boyhood by the impressive, fascinating histories, we, to whom, as to the whole Church from the first, and the Jewish Church before us, they have been, all our lives long, instructive, know that the works and words of God do 'not pass away.'

Miracles of God did not cease their office of instruction and impressiveness with the generation before whom they were wrought. Yet, even in that limited field, it is not true, according to the history itself, that God's dealings with Nebuchadnezzar had no effect even on Belshazzar and his Court. Daniel remained in honour among the conquering Medo-Persians, as among the conquered Babylonians. If men cast aside God's Word as a fable, it is, alas! their loss; but at least let them not falsify it, in order to prove it to have been useless.

Daniel wrote of certain events, which he was inspired to record in detail. He relates (which is a stamp of truth) without any explanation, in all simplicity. He alludes, in his narrative, to kings unknown to Grecian historians, and to the relations of empires; he mentions whole classes of officers, and the names of their offices, partly Semitic, partly of Aryan origin, and gradations of their rank; wise men and their classes; even musical instruments of different nations, and names of articles of dress which Hebrews did not use; he assigns dates freely; he describes what was probably a marvellous and very rare disease of the great monarch; he gives a scene from the interior of Babylon on the night of its capture, where, contrary to ordinary Eastern custom, he mentions the presence of the ladies of the harem, and, distinct from these, and not present with them at the feast, the Queen-mother speaking in a tone of authority; he tells even of the plain stucco on the walls of the banquet-room, such as, notwithstanding

the prevailing taste for ornament, is still found in the corresponding palaces of Nineveh; he alludes, in one word, even to the custom of Eastern kings (such as we find it among Persians and Parthians) to lie at table by themselves, 'over-against' their guests, probably for safety's sake; he gives events of that night, which fill it up, adversaries have said, even to overflowing, but for which time is left, since the fact is supplied, that the capture was not until towards morning; he describes capital punishment under the Babylonian and Persian kings, varying, in one respect, in conformity with their religion; the furnace he describes, as one only could have described it, who had seen such. In his natural, truthful, and so fearless description, he again and again tells us what for us, who have only an antiquarian knowledge of these things, it requires thought to harmonise. His accounts are minute, graphic. Daniel drew from the life; the apparent improbability is, when verified, the surest witness to truth. That building which, however many sides it may present to wind, storm, flood, cannot be shaken, is founded on the firm Rock.

DANIEL THE PROPHET, p. 458.

Prophecies.

No prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation.
2 PETER I. 20.

THE partial minuteness of Daniel's prophecies belongs to the transition state of the period for which those prophecies were given. They are in one sense a link between the Old and New Testament. God was preparing His people to depend more on His invisible Presence. In the captivity itself, the three great bodies of His people dispersed among the heathen, those in Assyria, in Egypt, and in Babylon, had still each their own great prophet,—Ezekiel, among the 'captives by the river of Chebar,' Jeremiah in Egypt, Daniel in Babylon. After the captivity, there were but three prophets more. Of these, the prophecies of Haggai preserved to us, fall in the space of four months, in the second year of Darius Hystaspes, sixteen years after their return; Zechariah began two months later than Haggai, and has no known date beyond the fourth year of Darius. The prophecy of Malachi is probably contemporaneous with the second visit of Nehemiah, about 400 B.C. Then prophecy ceased in act. It was exceptional, while it lasted. For those five centuries, in the first instance, the book of Daniel was written. God no longer willed to interfere visibly. Israel, a petty nation—hated,

envied, on account of its magnificent claims, that its God was the God of the whole world—was placed in the highway of the world, to be trampled upon by each in turn. Forerunner of the Christian Church, and itself shortly, the whole true Israel, to pass into it, it lay for the time, resting on the unseen Providence of God, and awaiting, with keener expectation, the Deliverer of itself and of the world. It was no longer to have single Prophets raised up, to explain to it or to point out God's dealings with it, to preach submission, or to promise mitigation of suffering or deliverance upon its repentance. But God 'left Himself not without witness.' Details of prophecy, such as aforetime had been given by different prophets in succession, were spread out before them at once, culminating in that great trial of faith, the last before our Lord's first Coming, when Antiochus Epiphanes used all artifice and force to extirpate the worship of the One God. Daniel foreshowed to them his power, his artifices, his partial success in abolishing the public worship of God, his sudden destruction without human hand. They should need no human might; they had but to endure, and the victory was God's.

These more detailed prophecies of Daniel, then, so far from being exceptional in God's dealings with His people, were in conformity with all His ways, as recorded for us, before the captivity; so far from being retrogressive, in introducing a more limited character of, so to speak, civil prophecy, his prophecy was adapted to a state of progress, a condition more like our own, in

which, instead of the living, revealing prophet, they were cast upon the written book. But in that book God taught them that, however the world might rage, it was in His hands. He Who beforehand told the course which ambitious, selfish, crafty, oppressive, sensual monarchs would take, and how it would fare with them, showed that He Himself ruled and overruled the affairs of men which He foreknew. The book of Daniel said in fact, at each stage of its fulfilment, what God said in words by Isaiah, 'Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare unto you; before they spring forth, I tell you of them.'

The same relation of a large future and a minute foreground of prophecy, which should be an assurance to men until those large prophecies had time for their fulfilment, recurs in the Gospel. What is now to us a primary evidence, the conversion of the nations, was to the Apostles matter of faith. To us it is a marvellous evidence which our own eyes see, that, as it was foretold, 'the Holy Church throughout the world,' millions upon millions, yea, a hundred millions thrice-told, worship Him Who, when it was foretold, was worshipped only by a small handful of men in a space not so large as one of our English counties; that they worship Him, as it was foretold, Who came, was rejected, was crucified by them as a malefactor, and so atoned for them who crucified Him, and for the whole world. The shame of the Cross is the triumph of prophecy. Jesus suffered, as it was written of Him; He reigns and is worshipped,

as was also written of Him. He endured what mere man could not endure; He reigns, as man could not reign. He has won the world to the Cross, as He foretold, and as man could not win it. The Church of all times and climes is large enough to be its own witness. It was foretold of, and, after eighteen centuries, endowed with the perpetuity of its Author and Founder; it IS. But while it was struggling into being, and man yet hoped to trample out its life, there was all that nearer, minuter foreground around the Person of our Lord. His acts and history were the fulfilment of minute prophecy. Even those things which man could have fulfilled, had he willed, as that entrance into Jerusalem, belonged to a character which none, save He Whose it was, could sustain,—greatness in lowliness. Such too were, the preaching of the Gospel to the meek, the binding up the broken-hearted, the liberty to the captives, the glorious light to the despised land of Galilee. Such, and much more, was all that sorrowful history of His Passion, the thirty pieces of silver, the shame, the spitting, the smiting on the cheek, the gall and the vinegar, the piercing, and that of the hands and the feet, the violent death by His people for whom He died. These would have been the end of all human pretensions. They were the beginning of *His* Divine kingdom, who said by His prophet, 'They shall look on Me Whom they have pierced;' of Whom it was said, 'Him Whom man despiseth, Him Whom the nation abhorreth, a servant of rulers, kings shall see

and arise, princes also shall worship.' Human wisdom could not conceive, human power could not accomplish, that such a death should be the regeneration of the world. Salvation through the Crucified was the stamp of foolishness which the Gospel bore in the eyes of the followers of Socrates.

That same characteristic of prophecy, the larger distance and the nearer earnest, occurs, too, in our Lord's prophecies. We know His prophecies, that He shall come to be our Judge. He told it often and most distinctly. But this being unseen, His judgment on the devoted city was the first earnest of that Judgment to come, with which accordingly He in His prophecy closely connected it,—as closely, and upon the same principle as Daniel, under inspiration of the Holy Ghost, connected the resurrection with Antichrist, and Antichrist with his Jewish type, Antiochus Epiphanes. Our Lord also used the same minuteness of prophecy, in that He directed His disciples to flee from Jerusalem after it had been encompassed by armies, a command which only became possible through the un-Roman retreat of Cestius Gallus. It is noticed also that, out of ten sieges which Jerusalem sustained, once only, in consequence of its rocky site, was it encircled with a wall; and that once was foretold by Jesus. Minuter yet were His predictions of the details of the contumelies heaped upon Him, the mode of His death, the threefold denial of S. Peter, the treason of Judas.

Humility.

He that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger ; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. I am among you as he that serveth.—S. Luke xxii. 26, 27.

Of humility there are many steps. Lay the first solidly, and God will lead thee onward. The first is to know truly, seriously, sincerely, thine own nothingness. Many will confess in words that they are nothing; but they neither believe themselves, nor wish to be believed of others. They say that they are miserable sinners. It is true and right. We all are. We confess it daily; and we must not confess mere words or lies to God. But it is one thing to own that we are all by nature sinners, that we have come short of the glory of God, that we and our neighbours cannot stand in God's sight. Very different is it to be ready to own, and that others should believe, that thou thyself art a sinner. If men really believed this of themselves, would they be so vexed that others saw some fault in them? Would they even be so vexed themselves at their own failures? If we felt ourselves really helpless, should we be so surprised and annoyed that we stumbled? I mean not in the greater sins. Those who are in the grace of God may be kept from these. But were it not for pride, we

should grieve for, not be annoyed by, our own failures or infirmities, from which men, in this imperfect state, can scarcely be free. Still less would people try to hide such faults from others, or excuse themselves so eagerly. And yet is it not an every-day thing to hide a negligence or carelessness by a lie? If a person has done a vain thing, and is charged with it, will he not lie to excuse it? Lovely indeed must humility be, since they who have it not are so ashamed at not being humble, that they will sin to hide it. Still stranger is the perverseness that people will accuse themselves, in order that they may not be believed. They will call themselves sinners, generally, or they will own lighter sins in themselves, as that they are quick-tempered, or hasty, but they will be angry if they are taken at their word. They accuse themselves in order that others may excuse them. They own the truth of themselves, that others may disown it to them, and cast dust in their eyes. How does it startle them if their own words are echoed to them, as seriously true! 'O ye sons of men, how long will ye love vanity and seek after leasing?' What nothings will men own of themselves! They will own that they are liable to be overtaken by faults which, in man's sight, have something noble mixed in them, or clever, or at least are not despised. But to own that they are, in any measure, what man despises, or that God hates what they are, how will they shrink from it! How common is it (ye know yourselves) to give soft names (misfortune or the like) to open deadly sin! And yet

those really in the grace of God, have seen that they had in themselves the germs of all the deadly sins. They have felt in themselves, that, were the grace of God withdrawn, they might fall into any sin. 'Thou knowest, Lord,' says S. Augustine, 'that there is no sin which man ever did, which another man might not do, if his Creator, by Whom man was made, were wanting to him.'

Well might men shrink from the truth, if it thereby ceased to be truth. But the truth is as surely truth as God is God. To what end to draw a veil over your eyes, since the Day of Judgment is near at hand, when every secret thing shall be revealed? 'Own,' says S. Chrysostom, 'and remember thy evil now, and God will forget it; forget thy good, and God will remember it.' This, then, let us learn first to know, that we are by nature nothing, that through our own fault we became worse than nothing. It is to rob God to take anything to ourselves,—any power of nature, any strength, understanding, memory, quickness, knowledge, taste, art, any gifts of body, or mind, or estate.

What is thy body? 'Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return.' How then should 'earth and ashes' be proud? What thy mind? The gift of God, of which He can deprive thee at once, destroy thy memory, darken thy understanding, take from thee clearness of understanding, or words to utter it. What thy soul? Precious indeed above all price, infinite in value, since it is the price of the blood of Christ. If it is in grace, beautiful it is above all created beauty, since it partakes

of the Brightness, and Glory, and Image of God! But what of this is thine own? Thy sins, in which, by whatever degree, thou hast marred the work of God in thee, or by which the brightness of God's grace is darkened, or hidden, or dulled in thee! All else is the work of God. Now, think in thyself how often thou hast, at least in thy younger years, neglected the Voice of God, done what thou oughtest not, not done what thou oughtest. Nay, if thou thinkest now that thou fully obeyest the Voice of God, and doest all which His grace would enable thee to do, it shows this only, that thou knowest not how powerful, gentle, tender, swift, mysterious, is the Grace of God. It comes, it speaks; if thou have not hearkened, it is gone. If thou listen to thine own will, thine own pleasure, thine own pride or vanity, it is, for the time, drowned.

What wouldst thou think of thyself if this world's glory and greatness had been offered thee for some short toil, some self-denial, abstaining from some pleasure, rising early and seeking the love of Him who could give it thee? Or what if thou mightest have had strong powers of mind, gifts of speech, skill, invention, memory, the wisdom of Solomon, if thou wouldest have been at pains with thyself? What wouldest thou think if thou hadst put these things aside, not as our Lord did the riches of the world, and the glories of them, not because thou mightest be more easily saved in a lowly place, but through thine own fault?

What, again, if thou hadst treated with shameful

thanklessness, forgotten, insulted Him who in love for thee offered thee these things? Surely thou wouldest despise thyself, wouldest be indignant with thyself; thou wouldest not boast thyself of any of the poor things thou hast; the thought of thy loss would come before thee, and thou wouldest be dumb with shame. And what if others praised thee for what thou hast, wouldest thou have pleasure in it, or be proud of it? or wouldest thou not think with grief and shame on what thou hadst wasted? But what were all the riches and glories of the world to the least possession of the Grace of God? What to be the very first in this world, to be the very last of those who for ever see God, know God, love God, and are beloved of God?

What our Lord came above all things to teach us, what He taught us, what He teaches us now by His very Being as Man, what He preached in act from His Birth in the manger, to His Death, bared of all and in shame, upon the Cross, what He made the first step to His apostles, who were filled with the Holy Ghost, to 'become as little children,' must be needful for us. Such rules as these may be useful; they have been tried:—

Know thyself. Pray God to show thee thyself. Bear in God's light to see thyself bared of all outward advantages, what thou thyself hast made thyself, what thou hast been, what thou art. By God's grace, the sight will never again let thee be proud.

Keep ever present with thee the knowledge of thine own infirmity.

Never seek praise, nor speak of any good of thee, except for some good end, nor say what may draw out praise. Yea, rather, if it be useful to speak of thine own experience, it is best mostly to hide, in some true way, that it is thine own.

Do not even blame thyself, if it makes others think thee humble.

Mistrust thyself in everything, and in the very least things seek, whenever thou canst remember it, the help of God.

Be afraid of the praise of others. If there be good in thee, own it, at least in thy heart, to be God's, and think of thy evil and thy sins.

Take patiently any humiliation from others. It is a precious gift of God. Humiliation is the way to humility, as patience to peace, reading to knowledge. If thou endurest not to be humbled, thou canst not be humble.

In all things humble thyself under the hand of God. Take all things, through whomsoever they come, from Him.

Do not excuse thyself, if blamed, unless respect or love, or the cause of truth and of God, require it. It is of more value to thee to detect one grain of fault in thyself, than to show to another that thou deservest not, as it were, a hundredweight of blame.

Be not careful to conceal any ignorance or fault in thee, unless it would hurt another to know that thou hast it.

Do willingly humble offices, humbly.

Give way to all, in all things in which thou mayest.

It is but for a short time at the longest. Seek here to be humble with the humble JESUS, and He will exalt thee. As thou becomest, by His grace, lowly here, thou shalt be exalted there. *There* is greatness which none envies; treasures, of which thou wilt deprive none; joys, in which all will joy with thee. There, not thine own lips or thine own thoughts, but thy Saviour will praise thee. Seek humility, and thou wilt find it; and when thou hast found it, thou wilt love it, and, by God's grace, will not part with it: with it, thou canst not perish. Yea, thou wilt reign for ever with JESUS, who was humbled for thee, and with the choirs in the heavenly dwellings. For there, too, thou wilt be humble; not as now, in the need of all things, but in the possession of all things; in glory and honour, and power and beauty, and knowledge and wisdom, of which we have but the faintest shadow here: and all from God, and in God.

For there, if thou attain, thou shalt cast thy crown before the Throne, saying, 'Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power;' and giving back all to God, thou shalt receive all from God, in bliss everlasting, through His merits who humbled Himself to thee, that thou, being humbled with Him here, shouldest enter into His glory and His joy.

PAROCHIAL SERMONS, vol. ii. p. 72.

Review of Life.

I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto Thy testimonies. made haste, and delayed not to keep Thy commandments.—PSALM CXIX. 59, 60.

SUCH is the history of almost all solid conversion. The great destroyer of the souls of men, which throughout the whole world is so widely wasting, is not so much wilful, deliberate sin as thoughtlessness. Ripened sinfulness alone is deliberate, with forethought. Most sinners are plunged into sin unawares. Even habitual sinners are 'overtaken,' as they say, again and again. They are walking at random, with no guard over their senses, no heed to their companions, not looking to their steps, and sin comes upon them, and, ere they know it, has the mastery over them. They flee not occasions of sin; they trust themselves very near it; Satan, unseen, drives them on; the place whereon they stand is slippery, and they fall in. They know not themselves, nor the strength of temptation, nor the deceitfulness of Satan, nor their own weakness, nor the strength and help of God; and, while they think that they stand, they are fallen. No one, hardly, purposes to be drunken; few

in their first fall, perhaps for many, mean to be wholly impure. And yet any one would say, that it was a very miracle of grace if one, on the verge of deadly sin, were stopped and saved.

To sin with forethought is, with a high hand to part with the very principle of good, to defy the Majesty of God, and to dare his Almightiness. We should rightly think it a very heavy increase of sin were any to do it with full forethought and consciousness. We speak of such acts as of unwonted malignity. Deliberate murder makes the blood run cold. Almost all, bad as they might themselves be, think that any who could plan to destroy, or lead astray female purity, had a beast's heart and a beast's nature, not man's. Wilful drunkenness would be a revolting extreme of sottishness. No one could come at once to purposed deadly sin. Forethought heightens the sin—so much so, that of many sins persons could not bring themselves to think beforehand. They will even blind themselves, resolve not to see, will not look in the face what they are about to do, lest they should not dare to do it, if they saw it. They will not think that they are about to do it, they will persuade themselves that they are not, they will look away from it, until they are close upon it, and then it is done. Nay, they will again and again begin on the course which ever ends in it, and think they will stop short this time, though they never did before. Thus, a young person tempted to lie will resolve not to think whether he will lie or no, until the

very moment that the lie may be told without steadily thinking on it. People go to rest prayerless, again and again, thinking they may say their prayers without the effort or solemn act of kneeling, although they know how often they have thus fallen asleep, without one thought of asking pardon, or of God's Fatherly care. They will put off duties, although they know that this always ends in their not doing them, because they will not do them, yet dare not say, 'I will not.' They say, 'I go, sir,' and go not.

Or they will hurry to their sin, as even Judas did to that last sin which filled up the measure of his wickedness. 'He went immediately out,' the Gospel says, 'and it was night.' He could not bear to stay in the presence of His Master, whom he would betray. To stay was to be drawn back. So he burst at once the bonds of love whereby his Lord would have held him, and 'went out.' And sinners now go forth quickly out of themselves that they may escape the presence of God within them rebuking them. They will sin hastily, impetuously, in order to avoid the struggle of conscience; they will not part with their purpose, yet, till they are quite hardened, it is a pain to sin against their Good God and Father; and so they will not take time to think what they are doing, because it is a torture to think that they are about to do evil, and yet to do it. 'It was night' when Judas went out to betray his good Master. He could not bear to look on his deed. Many sins are wrought by night, that people may hide

themselves from themselves more than from others. So rare, at least, until the heart is seared and hardened and inured to sin, is conscious, full, wilful sin. It is the very business of sinners to forget themselves, lest silence and stillness should force thought, and thought should reveal to them that fearful sight—themselves. Anything better than to be alone! for to be alone is to be brought before themselves. Any toil, or weariness, or wearisome society sooner than to be left alone! lest, when all is hushed, thought should awake, and God speak through it, and they be forced to hear. . . .

Since, then, persons come so slowly to full deliberate sin, what is the parent of this mass of sins wherewith we are encompassed? What is it which, day by day, is destroying souls? Thoughtlessness! At first sinners do not think; then, they will not think; at last, they cannot think. 'Let us drive away care, drown care,' is the invitation of sinners to one another, that they may forget themselves and God, and steep themselves in forgetfulness. The world invites them out of themselves. Satan shows them in his mirror, glories, beauties, enjoyments, for a long time to come. He goes before them, 'and his flock, the flock of the slaughter,' follow him; he is merry with them, applauds them, echoes their laugh, heightens their feasts, inflames them, makes the wine sparkle and give its colour aright, dances before them, until, in mirth and revelry and forgetfulness of self, they dance after him to the brink of hell. 'The harp and the viol, the tabret

and pipe, and wine, are in their feasts,' says the prophet Isaiah; but what follows? 'They regard not the work of the Lord, neither consider the operation of His Hands.' 'The voice of harpers and musicians, and of pipers, shall no more be heard in her,' is part of the woe on that great city, the city of the world, Babylon; the revelry whereby the world deadens the soul, and would drown the voice of God. And what is the last end of the world, when, 'like a snare it shall come upon the face of the whole world'? We know that in the last days 'perilous times shall come,' and iniquity shall abound, and men shall 'be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God.'

Yet our Lord, in foretelling the Day of Judgment, does not mark any of these, or even any open sins. He warns us against that one sin which shall run through all the rest—'thoughtlessness,'—thought, that is, of the things of this life, thoughtlessness of Him, their Maker, and of the God of their being, and wherein it should end, in Heaven or in Hell. 'As it was in the days of Noe, so shall it also be in the days of the Son of Man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. Likewise, also, as it was in the days of Lot, they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded'—things of every day, which needs must be every day, yet all things of time and sense, which men

might perform as God wills, but wherein they do forget eternity and God.

This is the history of most of mankind; a thoughtless childhood, careless youth, too thoughtful manhood; one half of life without thought, the other with misplaced thought; thoughtful of things of time and sense, thoughtless of Him who made them and of their real selves.

What does almost every countenance we see in this vast thronging city, rude or refined, express, but thoughtlessness, or a wrong thoughtfulness, — a vacant, self-enjoying look, or carefulness about the things of this life? So rare is thoughtfulness, that if any look thoughtful, men think he must have some sorrow. To be what Scripture calls 'grave' is to have some hidden anxiety or grief. To be a 'serious' person is a name of reproach. To be careful about the soul, is to be fain to be better than others. 'Man walketh to and fro in a vain shadow,' an image, shadow, sporting himself with, following after, grasping at, shadows, and himself becoming like them; bearing about him the image of things Divine, himself the image of God, yet by his own acts incrusting and covering over and burying that image in mire and clay, or wearing it off, line by line, until there remain only what shall mark him as a deserter, not what shall be owned by Him Who placed it on him.

What is the life of most men, even when free from overt, deadly sin? What is it, even if they are in some

degree engaged in works of their calling, in things in which they might please God, and, through the Blood of their Redeemer, gain Heaven? How very few are they, who in the morning ever set steadily before themselves the temptations, duties of the day; in what things they most often fail; wherein they can amend, and form one earnest purpose to give themselves during the day to God, and shape the actions of the day as shall please Him! How very few enter upon their every-day trials (however often they may have failed) with prayer to God for help! How few with any preparation at all! How few even know what some of their chiefest trials are! How few know, except in some half way, that they have even failed at all! Almost every command of God is broken, almost every deadly sin is committed; people are covetous, luxurious, slothful, envious, proud, angry, gluttonous; they speak ill of others, or against them, irreverently, vainly, and know not that they have done so. What is almost all conversation, almost everywhere, but a breach of the law of love, so that if a person would escape sin, he can hardly speak of all the world speaks of? And yet scarce any even doubt whether they are sinning! Act follows on act, and word on word, chasing one another, sweeping over one another, like wave on wave; and what remains in the memory? How few call themselves really, evening by evening, to any account! It were not too much to say, that many or most know more of the state of others' souls than of their own, and care more to know

it,—'Curious to know the lives of others, slothful to amend their own.'

Yet what should you think of one who left his house, or anything he *does* value, as unguarded as men are daily content to leave their souls? What of one who took no more account of his worldly affairs, day by day, or year by year? What of any who awaited with just as much care the inroad of enemies, who would wreak on you, your wives and children, the horrors we read of in Holy Scripture? And is *that* then thought with regard to the soul which would be thoughtlessness as to body or estate? Is *that* watchfulness as to the deadly enemy of our souls which would be recklessness as to bodily foes? Are heaven and hell, God and Satan, everlasting joy and woe, God's promises and His threats, a dream? or are men thoughtlessly dreaming on to the very brink of hell?

And so, in His mercy, lest with Dives we should awake too late in torments, God breaks in upon our dream, and the first step in turning back to Him is that He turns men back into themselves. 'I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto Thy testimonies.' Before this, then, he had not thought on them. 'I turned my feet *unto* Thy testimonies.' They were, then, before, turned other ways, and out of the ways of God's law, since they were now to be turned unto them. And yet more, he adds, 'I hasted and lingered not to keep Thy commandments,' as one who had for a long time, perhaps his whole life, been wandering unawares out of

God's ways, and now found himself in a far country, and much way to recover, and a brief time to do it, and the night perhaps at hand, 'in which no man can work,' but, where he should be found in death, there he should awake to judgment. He would henceforth not try to walk in two ways, as so many do, unwilling to part wholly with God, or yet with their sins; to walk, as it were, to heaven with one foot, and to hell with the other; for what else does *he* try to do, who would wilfully reserve part of his obedience, in some things serve God, in the rest himself? Such is the way of all solid conversion to God. He chooses different ways of turning us. He is very patient with us. Some turn faster, some slower. Some, perhaps, scarcely perceive the steps whereby they have been brought back. Yet this is the history of almost all who have been deeply turned to God at all. God met them in their way, when they were going. He, in whom we are, met them, mostly in merciful displeasure, as they turned from Him, that they might turn to Him, and find Him in love. He meets us thus in sickness, sorrow, failure of our hopes, loss of those we love, aching of the heart, and He summoneth us before Him by some stronger thrill or pang of conscience, by fear of death or hell, and asketh us, Whose art thou? Whence comest thou? Whither goest thou? And so He sends us back into ourselves, casts some ray of light into our souls, lights up before us past and to come, how our ways have been turned from Him, and whither they lead, until we shrink back in terror

from the pit of hell to which they were tending. He has doubtless called many by these very words, 'I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto Thy testimonies.'

PAROCHIAL SERMONS, vol. i. p. 201.

Hope.

My hope hath been in Thee, O Lord: I have said, Thou art my God.—PSALM XXXI. 14.

WOULD you grow in hope? First cast out all vain hopes; hope for nothing, hope in nothing, out of God.

Hope is high within the veil, 'where Christ sitteth on the Right Hand of God.' Grovel not in things below, among earthly cares, pleasures, anxieties, toils, if thou wouldst have a strong good hope on high. Thou canst not soar to heaven and stoop to earth. Lift up thy cares with thy heart to God, if thou wouldst hope in Him.

Then see what in thee is most displeasing to God. This it is which holdeth thy hope down. Strike firmly, repeatedly, in the might of God, until it give way. Thy hope will soar at once with thy thanks to God, Who delivereth thee.

Then cast all thy cares upon God. See that all thy cares are such as thou canst cast upon God, and then hold none back. Never brood over thyself; never stop short in thyself; but cast thy whole self, even this very

care which distresseth thee, upon God. He hath said, 'Cast *all* thy care.' He has excepted none, neither do thou.

Hope is a grace and gift of God. Try not to make it for thyself, nor look in thyself for grounds of hope; but pray God to pour it with faith and love into thy soul.

Our hopes are where our hearts are. Meditate often then on the Love of God, the Passion of our Lord, the price He paid for thee, His intercession for thee, His providence over thee, His gifts ever renewed to thee, His word pledged unto thee, and plead to the Father that He 'despise not the work of His own Hands, destroy not His own image though branded by sin;' to the Son, that He 'despise not the price of His own Blood, named after His own Name,' to whom He giveth His Body and Blood; to the Holy Ghost, that He despise not us into whom He breathed life, whom He has hallowed; and He, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, in Whom alone is thy hope, will have pity on thee, and give thee strong, sure, sustaining, well-grounded hope in Him, grounded on Him Whose 'mercies' alone are 'sure.'

'My hope hath been in Thee, O Lord; I have said, Thou art my God.' 'My hope is in Thee.' Sweet it is that our hope should rest in Him Who is never shaken; that it should abide in Him Who never changeth; that it should bind us to Him Who can hold us fast to Himself; Who alone is the full contentment of the soul;

that it should, as it were, enter into Him, since 'in Him is our being,' Who is Love. Sweeter yet is it that this our hope is no fruit of our own thought; we do not come at it by our understandings; we do not gather it for ourselves, even from His Word alone. It is, with Faith and Love, His gift, poured out within us, drawing us upward to Himself. Yet Holy Scripture has one sweeter word still. Not only is our hope in Him, but He Himself is our hope. 'Thou art my hope,' saith the Psalmist. 'God our Saviour and Lord Jesus Christ,' saith S. Paul, 'our hope.' Yea, there is a deeper, nearer depth. The glory of the mystery of the Gospel, says S. Paul, is 'Christ in you, the hope of glory.' Each yearning of our hearts, each ray of hope which gleams upon us, each touch which thrills through us, each voice which whispers in our inmost hearts of the good things laid up in store for us, if we will love God, are the Light of Christ enlightening us, the Touch of Christ raising us to new life, the Voice of Christ, 'Whoso cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out.' It is 'Christ in us, the hope of glory,' drawing us up by His Spirit, Who dwelleth in us, unto Himself, our hope. For our hope is not the glory of heaven, not joy, not peace, not rest from labour, not fulness of our wishes, nor sweet contentment of the whole soul, not understanding of all mysteries and all knowledge, not only a torrent of delight; it is 'Christ our God, the hope of glory.' Nothing which God *could* create is what we hope for; nothing which God could give us out of

Himself, no created glory or bliss, or beauty or majesty or riches. What we hope for is our redeeming God Himself, His love, His bliss, the joy of our own Lord Himself, Who hath so loved us, to be our Joy and our Portion for ever.

Oh, will ye not then say with me, once for all, 'Farewell all vain hopes and desires out of God;' 'Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison of Thee;' 'Thou Thyself art my Hope and my Portion in the land of the living;' 'In Thee I shall not be disappointed of my hope'?

PAROCHIAL SERMONS, vol. ii. p. 37.

God's Presence in Loneliness.

Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak to her heart.—HOSEA II. 14.

BLESSED are those holy hours in which the soul retires from the world to be alone with God. God's voice, as Himself, is everywhere. Within and without He speaks to our souls, if we would hear. Only the din of the world, or the tumult of our own hearts, deafens our inward ear to it. Stillness is as His very Presence, for, like the prayer for the prophet's servant, it opens our senses to perceive what was there to behold, only our eyes were holden. 'There is neither speech nor language,'—the voice is not heard; 'day unto day uttereth speech' to hearts that hearken; 'and night unto night showeth knowledge.' All God's works, because He has made them bear the traces of His hand, and speak of Him to the soul that is alone with Him. All works of man, directed or overruled by His Providence, everything, good or bad, speaks of His presence or His absence. But chiefly in the inmost soul He speaks, because there He dwells. To

be alone is to feel the Presence of God, in love or in displeasure, as a Friend or a Stranger, as One Whose voice the soul hath heard and known and loved, or one it dreads, feeling itself condemned by it. So does God watch over the soul, so plead with it, so ever-present is He, so unwilling to part with it, or that it should part with Him, its only good; so doth He long, as it were, to find an entrance there, ever knocking at the heart, ever striving to find an avenue into it, that it may receive Him, and in Him be blessed for ever. And hence, until the soul will open its whole self to God, it shrinks from inward and outward loneliness. The restless love of amusement, society, outward excitement; even reading, besides any object for itself, has mainly this, to escape being alone with its own thoughts, because *there* it will find God. Dull often, and weary, will the employment be, but, like the clay used by savages to dull the pain of hunger, it stifles in the soul the sense of the presence of Him, whose love it knows not. And therefore doth God so often create in the soul a still more awful loneliness, rending from it that on which its very being hung, that at length it may learn to live alone with God, when all it loved with God is withdrawn from sight. Then, in those sacred solemn hours, if these too it wastes not, it learns to love and to be with Him, Whom 'none loseth, but who leaveth,' that only 'place of rest imperturbable, where love is not forsaken, if itself forsaketh not.'

Once ye must at least be alone, and lonely indeed is

that journey if He be not by thee who first trod it for thee, that in it thou mightest 'fear no evil.' None else can then share thy fears; none can so speak to thy heart; none, though he would die with thee, can share thy journey with thee. Alone must each give up his spirit unto Him Who gave it. Oh may it not be alone, but in union with Him Whose words were, 'Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit;' and Who, with His Own, commended ours! But will He then indeed be with us in death if we be not with Him in life? Oh let us then learn to be alone with God now! It is only afar off that the wilderness looks a waste, and terrible and dry. Was it not there that man did eat angels' food, and water gushed out of the hard rock, and bitter waters were made sweet, and God bare His own, and their feet did not swell, and He spake unto them, 'and proclaimed Himself merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth'? Trust thyself alone with Him, and so in thine inmost heart will He proclaim Himself unto thee, 'The Lord, thy God, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin.' There shalt thou speak to God 'face to face,' and 'hear what the Lord thy God will speak' in thee. Thou shalt tell Him thy sorrows, thy falls, thy sins, the wildness or forgetfulness or carelessness of thy youth. Then, pour out before Him griefs which thou wouldst shrink that the world should know, and He shall say unto thee, 'Thy sins be forgiven thee,' 'Go and sin no more.'

There shall He renew thy soul, hear thy prayer and answer it, shed hope around thee, kindle thy half-choked love, give thee some taste of His own Boundless Love, give thee the longing to pass out of all besides, out of thy decayed self, gathered upward unto Him who came down hither to our misery, to bear us up unto Himself, and make us one spirit with Him.

It was a heathen (Scipio Nasica) who said, 'Never am I less alone, than when alone; nor less unemployed, than when unemployed.' For not to be employed in the turmoil of this world was to be employed in his own soul; and in his loneliness He Whom, unknowing, he worshipped and felt after, 'if haply he might find Him,' drew him secretly to Himself. A heathen (Horace) spoke of 'the retreat which restored him to himself.' It was a heathen who gave the Lenten rule (Seneca), 'I went aloof not from men only, but also from business, and especially mine own. Hardly must the body be dealt with, lest the soul miserably perish. Despise all which a superfluous labour would add but to deck thee out. Think that in thee nothing is marvellous except the soul, to which, being great, nothing is greater.' Truly, for so great is the soul that heaven and earth could not content it, since it contains Him, the Maker of heaven and earth, indwelling it by Love.

Ye will not shrink, brethren, from that to which nature itself calls you, your own soul secretly bids you, God Himself, by His promises, allures you? Oh how much more by His secret presence there! 'The secret

of the Lord is with them that fear Him,'—a secret inward converse with the soul, full of consolation and thrilling joy, as a man speaketh with his friend. But secret converse calls for a secret ear and a hushed soul.

Until in silence ye enter into that Sacred loneliness, ye know not whither ye are going. In loneliness a man knows himself and his God. Enter thou with Him, and by His grace thou wilt not come forth as thou goest in. As thou wouldst not in a tempest be tossed about without compass, neither sun nor stars appearing, so trust thyself no longer to the sea of this troublesome world, not knowing whether thou art indeed, year by year, reaching nearer towards the haven where thou wouldst be. As thou wouldst not leave thy worldly affairs unexamined, lest they go to ruin, be as faithful with thy soul. If thou hast not yet, review once, under the Eye of God, thy life as a whole, and see whither it has been, and is, tending. Bear, in the Presence of God, to know thyself. Then seek to know for what God sent thee into this world; how thou hast fulfilled it. Art thou yet what God willed thee to be? What yet lacketh unto thee? What is God's will for thee *now?* What chiefly hinders thee from inward peace? What one thing mayest thou *now* do, by His grace, to obtain His favour and approve thyself unto Him? Say unto Him, 'Teach me to do Thy will, for Thou art my God,' and He will say unto thy soul, 'Fear not, I am thy salvation.' He will speak peace unto thy soul; He will set thee in the way; He will speak to

thy soul 'good words and comfortable words;' He will bear thee above things of sense and praise of man, and things which perish in thy grasp, and give thee, if but afar off, some glimpse of His own unfading, unsetting, unperishing, Brightness and Bliss and Love. Only, by His grace, take with thee one earnest purpose, to desire to know the will of God for thee, and to do it.

Above all, treasure any season in which God Himself maketh thee lonely. When He brings thee back into thyself, seek not to go forth out of thyself. Whether it be by sickness, or by bereavement, or by any other sorrow, by want of the sympathy of the world, by distresses which make the heart sick and faint, go not forth out of thyself, but, with the prophet, stand in loneliness 'upon thy watch, and set thee upon the tower,' dwell in Him who 'is a most strong tower to all them that put their trust in Him.' He will fence thee round, that nothing outward break in upon the sacred stillness of thy soul, which seeketh to be hushed in Him. Where He is, is great peace.

Learn to commune with Him in stillness, and He whom thou hast sought in stillness, will be with thee when thou goest abroad. Go not abroad out of thyself, and He will not depart from thee. He cometh not to us to leave ŭs, if we would detain Him with us. Gather thyself from time to time in thyself; recall to thyself, Whose am I? For whom am I doing this? How would God have me do it? Lift up thine eyes to the holy 'Pattern showed thee in the Mount'—even His

who came not to do His own will, but the will of Him who sent Him. Thy Redeemer, who would work all thy work in thee, will gather thee up wholly into Himself, all thy thoughts, words, and deeds, that they be thought, spoken, done in Him.

His visitations are seasons of grace; miss we not for our own souls any, so shall joy spring out of sorrow, abundance out of want, comfort out of desolation, hope out of hopelessness, rest out of trouble, life out of death, from brief 'afflictions' an 'eternal weight of glory.' He Himself shall be the strength of our hearts now 'in this valley of the shadow of death.' Himself, 'who filleth all things,' shall 'in the land of the living,' and 'the brightness of His presence,' be our portion for ever.

PAROCHIAL SERMONS, vol. i. p. 247.

Love.

And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.—1 Cor. xiii. 13.

How are we to know whether we have love, how gain it? The tests whereby we may know whether we have love of God for Himself, are also the means of gaining it, or of increasing it, if, through them, He has given it. How is it with those whom you dearly love on earth? Be this the proof of your love of God.

You gladly think of them when absent. You joy in their presence, even though they be silent to you. Love makes them seem to be present with you, even when in body they are absent. You are glad to turn from converse with others to speak with them. One word or look of theirs is sweeter than all which is not they.

The soul which loves God for its own sake, thinks only of God when it needs Him. When things go smoothly such a soul forgets Him. She is taken up by her own pleasure, and scarcely or coldly thanks Him. In trouble she recollects herself, and flies to Him.

The soul which loves God for His own sake gladly

escapes from the business of the world to think of Him; she recollects Him in little chinks and intervals of time, in which she is not occupied; she takes occasion of all things to think of Him; is glad of hours of prayer that she may be with Him; is glad to be alone with Him; glad to come to Him here in His holy house, or in His Sacraments, to dwell with Him, and that He may dwell in her. She prays Him, 'Abide with me, Lord;' pushes herself that she may hear His Voice, gathers herself together, lest, in the distractions of things of self, she should lose him; she attends to the lowest whispers of His Voice, lest she lose any which should show her His mind and will for her.

Again, you are glad to hear of those you love; you are glad when others speak good of them, even if you do not speak yourself; you heed not who it is that speaketh of them, so that he tells you of their goodness; you would take pains to understand any word of theirs which he told you.

'He who is of God,' our Lord saith, 'heareth the words of God.' Mary, who 'loved much,' 'sat at the feet of Jesus, and heard His Words.' It is in reading the Words of Jesus that the heart burns within us; it is in 'musing' within us over the Word of God, that the 'fire kindles.' Love loveth to hear the humblest speak of Jesus' love, to learn of any one how to love Jesus more. Love knoweth that it knows all too little of that 'love' of Jesus, 'which passeth knowledge,' and searches His Words, and longs to know their meaning

more, and learns in all the ways it can, if so be it may know more of Jesus and His love.

Again, deep human love loves anything which belongs to what it loves. Love will love a piece of dress, a plant, dumb animals, simply because they belong to the object of its love. How much more, if we love Jesus, must we love all for whom Jesus died! If we love God, must we not love man, who was made in the image of God, redeemed by His blood, sanctified by His Spirit, made by His own hands, remade by Him, and, though weak and wayward and rebellious against Himself, still the object of His love? How much more when He, whom we would love, gave them to us in charge! 'A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.'

Had not the Apostles so loved God we had been heathen still. This has been the love which has converted nations, spread the knowledge of God. This still seeks out sinners for repentance, teaches the ignorant, is patient with the wayward, bears with the contradictory, tends the young, recalls the wandering, has fellow-feeling with the worst of sinners, thinks nothing hopeless which Christ does not cut down, is unconquered by weariness, unbroken by disappointment, unmoved by ingratitude; for truly all this were we, when Christ, in long-suffering, sought and found us. And hath He not Himself said, 'Shouldst thou not have had compassion upon thy fellow-servants, even as I had pity on thee?'

But love for God cares also for the bodily wants of those whom, with it, God has loved. This is the very test which the Apostle of love, the beloved disciple, gives us, whether our love be love of the lips or of the heart, in word and tongue, or in deed and truth. 'Whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?'

Love gladly suffereth for one whom it loveth. It joys to suffer, in proof of its love. Toil ceaseth to be toil; it is joy when it is to show its love. Love sweetens all bitter things, softens all hard words, smooths all which is toilsome, makes fasting a feast, self-denial for Christ's poor a joy; labour rest, and rest out of God, weariness; waking early with Christ, refreshment. Bodily pain is hallowed to it by His Cross, and it receives each throb or pang from its loving Father's hand as distilling like the dew upon it from that precious Cup which He, for our sakes, gave to His Well-beloved Son.

Love is jealous for the honour of one it loves: it will not bear a slight, it is eager to set those right who speak amiss. Zeal for the honour of God, which longs that none should dishonour Him, none blaspheme His Name, which feels tenderly any irreverence or slight to Him, is a good sign of love; if we are but first zealous with ourselves, that we ourselves do, or occasion, Him no dishonour.

To mention but one more token of love: Love does

all things for his sake whom it loves; it counts nothing too little, nothing too great, to do for love. Nothing so purifies the thoughts, heightens the acts, shuts out self, admits God, as, in all things, little or great, to look to Jesus. Look to Him when ye can, as ye begin to act, or converse, or labour; and then desire to speak or to be silent, as He would have you; to say this word, or leave that unsaid; to do this, or leave that undone; to shape your words as if He were present, and He will be present, not in Body, but in Spirit, not by your side, but in your soul, so that of you too, in your measure, it may be said, 'It is not ye who speak, but the Spirit of your Father Which dwelleth in you.' 'He hath wrought all our works in us.'

Faint not, any who would love Jesus, if ye find yourselves yet far short of what He Himself, Who is Love, saith of the love of Him. Perfect love is Heaven. When ye are perfected in love, your work on earth is done. There is no short road to Heaven or to love. Do what in thee lies by the grace of God, and He will lead thee from strength to strength and grace to grace, and love to love.

Be diligent by His grace to do no wilful sin; for sin, wilfully done, kills the soul, and casts out of it the love of God.

Seek to love nothing out of God. God remakes a broken heart, and fills it with love. He cannot fill a divided heart.

Think often as thou canst of God. For how canst

thou know or love God, if thou fillest thy mind with thoughts of all things under the sun, and thy thoughts wander to the ends of the earth, and thou gatherest them not unto God? Nothing (except wilful sin) so keepeth men torpid and lukewarm, and holdeth them back from any higher fervour of love, as the being scattered among things of sense, and the being taken up with them away from God.

Bring all things as thou mayst nigh to God; let them not hurry thee away from Him.

Be not held back by any thought of unworthiness or by failure from the childlike love of God.

When we were dead in trespasses and sins, Christ died for us; when we were afar off, Christ recalled us; when lost, Christ sought us. Much more may we reverently love Him, and hope that we are loved by Him, when He has found us, and we, amid whatever frailties, would love Him by Whom we have been loved.

Be diligent, after thy power, to do deeds of love. Think nothing too little, nothing too low, to do reverently for the sake of God. Bear with infirmities,—ungentle tempers, contradictions; visit, if thou mayst, the sick; relieve the poor; forego thyself and thine own ways for love; and He Whom in them thou lovest, to Whom in them thou ministerest, will own thy love, and will pour His own love into thee. 'The love of God,' saith a holy man, 'produceth the love of our neighbour, and kindleth it;' the love of our neighbour winneth the love of God.

Where, above all, shouldst thou seek for His love, but in the Feast of His Love? Without It, ye cannot have any true love. In It, Jesus willeth to come to thee, to dwell in thee, to abide in thee. Canst thou be warm, if thou keep away from the sun or the fire? Canst thou have any fire of love, if thou keep away from Jesus? Or, canst thou think to find Him, if thou seek Him not where He is to be found? He has said, 'Except ye eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His Blood, ye have no life in you.' How should ye have life if ye have not Him Who is life? How should ye have Him, if ye refuse to come to Him? Come to Him, longing for His love; come to Him, that He may come to you; pray Him to enter into your soul, and pour His love into you, and He will come, and if you forsake Him not, will dwell in you everlastingly.

'Charity never faileth.' How then is all lost which tendeth not to love! O abyss of love, torrent of pleasure, life of them that believe, paradise of delights, comfort of our pilgrimage, reward of the blessed, root of all good, strength in all strife, rest in all weariness! 'Why will ye labour for that which is not bread, and toil for that which satisfieth not?' Why seek for pleasures which perish in the grasp, and when tasted become bitterness? Why heap up things ye must part with, or why love vanities, when you have before you love which cannot weary, cannot change, cannot sate, cannot fail? for Love is the Essence, the Bliss, the Being, the Glory of God, and this may be yours for ever-

more. God, in whom are all things, Who is all goodness, willeth that you love Him eternally, and be eternally filled with His love, and enter into His Joy—the Joy of the Everlasting Father, in His Co-Equal Son, through the Spirit of Both proceeding, the Bond of Both, and that ye should rest in the Bosom of His love; and His love rest upon you and fill you for ever. Will ye not then cast out now, for these few years, what hinders in you the love of God, that ye may have for ever His Love, which passeth all understanding, and be one with God, being filled with the Love of God, Who is Love?

PAROCHIAL SERMONS, vol. ii. p. 54.

How to attain Jesus in the Soul.

And He made as though He would have gone further. But they constrained Him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And He went in to tarry with them.—S. Luke xxiv. 28, 29.

The histories of Holy Scripture are pictures of ourselves, what we are, or ought to be, or ought not to be; what we should do, what avoid. By them God often reveals to us our inmost selves. He shows us, in His Saints, what, by His grace, we might have become; and more often, alas! in those who have come short of that grace, what we have been, or are, or are in danger of being. We see there marked with God's hand, either in God's earlier people, or in individuals whom He has rejected, something awfully like ourselves. It shows us that there often seems much to admire in some, whom God saith He hateth. Who, until taught otherwise, would not admire what seems open-heartedness in Esau, whom Holy Scripture calls 'a profane person;' or would not follow Balaam with feelings almost of respect, until that last deed of tempting Israel to sin; or admire Saul's early nobleness, and Jehu's zeal for the Lord; and pity

even Judas's entire self-hating repentance? So would God warn us not to trust in any natural grace which He has given us, nor to allow the slightest evil, consciously, to work in us. So would He warn us of the narrowness of the way of life.

But now, at this joyous season of Easter, He calleth us with gladlier histories, and tells us how He appeared when 'God showed Him openly, not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God.' During these Holy forty days in which 'He showed Himself alive after His Passion, by many infallible proofs, speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God,' Holy Scripture leads us apart from the world into His Secret Presence. It tells us not what the world did, except the one lie of the Chief Priests, whereby they hoped to hinder the power of God; but carries us away to be alone with those who were alone with Jesus. They to whom Jesus then showed Himself were the first-fruits of the elect, the corn sifted from the chaff, which was mostly to bring forth much fruit by dying with its Lord —holy souls, which lived but for their Lord in a sacred solitude, hanging upon Him even when unseen, awaiting to hear His will, tarrying for His fuller Presence, and 'the promise of the Father;' speaking of Him, thinking of Him, visited, enlightened, kindled by Him. He was the centre of their being. For Him alone, as by Him alone, they lived. The world rejected them as it had Him. It cast them out, and was ready to persecute them; they were 'shut up for the fear of the Jews.'

But the lion which roared without, 'seeking whom he might devour,' could not enter that sacred fold. There was a solemn, still pause; rest on earth; Satan awaiting how his kingdom should be overthrown; our blessed Lord not as yet taking His Throne of Glory, but by His brief, unearthly visits, preparing His disciples for the loss of His Bodily Presence; enlightening, strengthening, arming them to overcome the world as He had overcome it. It was one brief, hushed period, wherein the Apostles were to be clad in their armour of light, for that long struggle with the powers of darkness, which was to be carried on unto the end.

These visits of our Lord, then, had something of the character of His visits to the soul by His Spirit since. They are pictures to us how and for what those visits are vouchsafed, to what sort of persons, how they are to be received.

And this, to the disciples of Emmaus, represents how Christ shows Himself to those who commune of Him, who have Him in their hearts, who muse mournfully, that they have no more sense of His Presence, that He has wrought no greater deliverance for the Church, nor for them in it.

They believe in Him, yet know not fully Whom they believe; their heart believes, but their understanding doubts; their hope is not extinct, but smouldering. In that they say, 'We trusted that it should have been He Who should have redeemed Israel,' they show that their trust was not effaced, but that it was clouded

They trust still, yet the time of fulfilment, the third day, is come, and since the promise is not fulfilled, they, like Saul when waiting for Samuel, were tempted to disbelieve. Yet they were perplexed only. And so, since they felt after Him Who is the Truth, the Truth found them. 'As they communed together and reasoned, Jesus Himself drew near and went with them.' To meditate on Jesus brings Him down to the soul, even if as yet we know not that it is He. The disciples have an awe of His sacred presence; they speak to Him as a stranger, yet they speak to Him in love of Himself; they listen in reverent stillness to His earnest rebuke, 'O fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!' their 'hearts burned within them, while He talked with them by the way, and while He opened to them the scriptures.'

Even now they had no clear knowledge Who He was. Yet the Holy Stranger had kindled a coal in their hearts. It was otherwise with them than when He had joined them; and now a choice was to be made. Either the Stranger must be brought nearer to them, to their home, under their roof, or they must part with Him. Would they ever have seen Him again, had they so parted? 'Jesus made as though He would have gone further.' This was, of course, true, which He did. He would have gone, only they constrained Him. 'Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent.' He willed to abide with them, but only if they prayed Him. They prayed Him to

abide out of love to Him, rather than for themselves. And, showing in act their love to a stranger, they received not 'Angels,' but the Lord of Angels, 'unawares.'

Ye know the rest, brethren; how, in the breaking of bread, or the Holy Eucharist, 'He opened their eyes, and they knew Him,' 'He vanished out of their sight,' but they believed on Him. Before, they had seen Him and not known Him. Now, for a time, they see Him no more, but they believe in Whom they see not, they joy in Whom they behold not; they love Him Who is out of their sight, and, believing, they 'rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.' They go to spread their joy to their brethren, and they meet with the glad tidings that by one of them also He had been seen: 'The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared unto Simon.' Most joyous meeting of souls to whom Christ had appeared apart, and who now were met to tell of His loving-kindness!

Such is the history, and manifold its teaching,—a teaching which extends over the whole of life, relates to every Communion, to every fervent prayer which any, by God's grace, prays, to every melting of the hard heart, to every drawing of the soul to serve God better. It belongs to every outpouring of His grace. It is the great need of active diligence, not to part with Jesus, when He has once been near us, and visited our souls. On this depends growth in grace, the Good Pleasure of God, the Love of Christ, holiness,

everlasting bliss, salvation. 'Jesus made as though He would have gone further. But they constrained Him, saying, 'Abide with us; for it is toward evening.' So it is with the soul. Jesus visits it in many ways. Every visitation of God, in awe and mercy, is a visit of Jesus to the soul. It feels His Presence. It is troubled, and turns to Him; it is alarmed at itself, or with fears of hell, and flees to Him; or He brings before it its own crooked ways, and the loathsomeness of its sin, and it would fain escape out of itself to Him; or He gives it thoughts of His own everlasting Love, and the bliss of ever loving, ever being beloved, and kindles some longing for Him. Everything which deadens the soul to the world, or quickens it to heavenly things, is a visit of Jesus. Fast or feast, Lent or Easter, inward joy or outward sorrow, the hunger of the soul or His satisfying it, the restlessness of the soul until it has found God, or that deep, tranquil calm when His Light dawns on the soul, and it sees and feels that it was made for One alone, that One alone can fill it. One love displaces all besides; One object of its faith, hope, joy, praise, its labour or its rest, its speech or its silence, stands revealed before it. The unformed yearning of the young soul to be wholly God's, or the aching of the heart of elders that it has ever loved things out of Him; the bright glow of childhood, which says with young Samuel, 'Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth;' or penitence stricken with Saul to the earth, and crying from the dust, 'Lord,

what wouldst Thou have me to do?' every thought of God, every desire to love Him, every hope, fear, misgiving, imagining; every crushing of the heart's bright earthly joys; every gleam of that unsetting Sun which shineth on it from heaven, the hiding of His Face, or the sunshine of His Presence,—all are in different forms visits from Jesus; yet in all we have need to say, 'Abide with us, Lord!'

To have had calls, is a token that God has cared for thy soul; to have had them and neglected them, were, in itself, a forerunner of final hardness of heart and of damnation, but that God's goodness overwhelmeth our evil; to have them now, and to use them, is the only token of salvation.

Again, of individuals: Saul perished without one thought of God, dreading only shame from man, a self-murderer. Yet this was he upon whom the Spirit of God had come, and given him another heart, and he was turned into another man, and God was with him (1 Sam. x. 6-9). He took not patiently the chastisement of God, who, on his disobedience, gave his kingdom to his neighbour, and 'the Spirit of the Lord departed from him, and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him.' How does Balaam, again and again, seem to cling to God, or, still more, to be holden back by God? What fairer words could there be than 'Get you into your own land, for the Lord refuseth to let me go with you'? 'If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the

Lord my God, to do less or more.' 'Lo, I am come unto thee; have I now any power at all to say anything? The word that God putteth in my mouth, that shall I speak.' 'Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.' Nor were they words only, but acts. 'When Balaam saw that it pleased the Lord to bless Israel, he went not, as at other times, to seek for enchantments,' and he 'saw the vision of the Almighty;' yea, he 'beheld' our Lord, 'but not nigh;' he saw the 'Star arise out of Jacob, and the Sceptre out of Israel;' yet himself perished shortly in rebellion against God, whom, in words and deeds, yet not in his very inmost heart, he had owned.

How did the disobedient prophet withstand every temptation but that wherein Satan was as an angel of light? God was with him, but he did not abide with God, nor God with him. How blessed was Solomon's youth, when, Holy Scripture saith, 'the Lord loved him,' and gave him 'a wise and an understanding heart,' and 'he loved the Lord'! How miserable his age, when he loved many strange women, and they turned away his heart; 'and the Lord was angry with him because his heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel, which had appeared to him twice'! How glorious the beginning of Gideon, when the Angel of the Lord appeared unto him, and said unto him, 'The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour,' and cast down the altar of Baal, and when he cried 'The sword of the Lord and of Gideon!' How sore the close, when

'of the prey he made an ephod, and all Israel went thither a-whoring after it, and it became a snare to Gideon and his house'! Asa 'did that which was good and right in the eyes of the Lord his God, and his heart was perfect all his days.' Yet, in the disease whereof he died, 'he sought not to the Lord, but to the physicians.' Jehoash 'did right in the sight of the Lord all the days wherein Jehoida the priest instructed him.' After above thirty years of service, 'he remembered not the kindness which Jehoida, the father of Zechariah, had done to him, but slew his son between the temple and the altar

Even bad men have hearkened to the voice of God for a while, in the midst of their sins. Ahab 'humbled himself,' more than many Christians will, and obtained for himself the delay of punishment in this world. 'Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and a holy, and observed him, and when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly, though he beheaded him. 'He heard him gladly,' 'was exceedingly sorry' for his oath, yet passion had the mastery, and he did what he grieved for. He, in a manner, believed our Lord's miracles to be true, wished to see them wrought, was 'exceeding glad to see Him;' yet wherein did it all end? 'Herod, with his men of war, set Him at nought, and mocked Him.' Even Simon Magus believed for a time, 'beholding the miracles and signs which were done,' although he was at last struck dead when withdrawing men from the faith. And when

our Lord foretells how His word would be received by those who heard it He tells us of one sort only, 'who, in an honest and good heart, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience,' that is, enduring to the end; the other three hear it (and one with joy) but in the end lose it.

And is this not what we see day by day, and know or have known in ourselves? How many praise sermons, how few act on them! Not to such as we are, but to a prophet, God saith, 'Thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a very pleasant voice, and can play well upon an instrument, for they hear thy words, but they do them not.' How many perceive the beauty of holiness, how few are holy! How many can speak well of Jesus, how few obey Him steadfastly or consistently! How many, in sickness or sorrow, when the Hand of God is heavy upon them, or death is near, purpose strongly amendment of life, to break off some sin, to cherish some grace; how few, when their fear or the pressure is removed, fulfil the promises they made! How common it is for persons to make some diligent preparation for the Holy Communion, and then, when they have received Him for Whom they prepared (as our Liturgy saith, from Holy Scripture, 'then we dwell in Christ, and Christ in us'), to think of nothing less than of Him Whom they have prayed to come under their roof. So that the reason most Communions profit people so little is, that they take so little care afterwards that they should profit them; that they so little

regard His presence in their soul, their Life, their God, and their All.

And, now, what should we do when, in this fleeting world, nothing, not even virtue, abideth at one stay? When grace, good feelings, holy thoughts, earnest purposes, good desires, kindled longings after Him, the soul's All; motions of His Holy Spirit, His presence in the soul, Heavenly visitations, His gracious call, stillness of our passions, inward prayer, joy in Him, all seem like gleams from heaven flashing on the darkness of our souls, and ever ready to depart, what is our hope? What should be our hope when all fleeteth, but in Him Who alone abideth? What, when 'nothing continueth at one stay,' but in Him Who alone is our stay? 'And now, Lord, what is my hope? Truly my hope is even in Thee.' 'Abide with us, Lord.' To this very end doth Jesus make as if He would go further, that we may stay Him, and reverently say to Him, 'I will not let Thee go unless Thou bless me,' or with the spouse, 'I have found Him whom my soul loveth: I hold Him and will not let Him go.'

Be this, then, our wisdom, our joy, our stay in time, our hope for eternity. In all the changes and chances of this mortal life, 'morning by morning, and evening by evening, in the morning of our days, if it be yet morning with any of us, and still more if it be towards evening with us, and the night is drawing on; in the glad morning of our joy and consolation, or in the evening of tribulation and loneliness; in the morn-

ing when the Light of His countenance is shed around us, and shineth into our souls, and in the evening when darkness cometh over us, and mists of temptation hide His presence from us, be this the joy of our joys, the comfort of our tears—"Abide with us, Lord!" For without Thee this world's light, and all the purest joys of the whole world, were but a false glare, cold and comfortless to the soul; with Thee, who art Light and Love, all darkness is light and joy.'

> 'Abide with us from morn till eve,
> For without Thee we cannot live;
> Abide with us when night is nigh,
> For without Thee we dare not die!"

PAROCHIAL SERMONS, vol. i. p. 343.

The Besetting Sin.

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.—HEB. XII. 1.

THUS does S. Paul close that glowing account of the deeds of faith under the Old Testament. He had first taught what faith was. 'Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.' Faith makes the things of the life to come, our life with God, our eternal rest in His love, and our glory amid that rest, as present to the soul as if we saw them. They are or subsist in themselves eternally. Faith makes them to subsist in us. Faith is a Divine knowledge, given by God, whereby we know the things which shall be after death as certainly, though not as fully, as though we saw them. Faith makes them to exist in the soul. The being which they have, it makes to be in us. We see by faith what by our bodily eyes we see not, but we behold it as certainly as if it were before our eyes. Blessed, if we lose not sight of it!

Then S. Paul sets before us, one by one, some of the

noble band of the faithful under the Old Testament, and shows us the sort of faith of Abel, and Noah, and Abraham; how they acted on their belief, showed their faith by their faithfulness, forewent things present for the sake of things unseen, and obtained the praise of God, and the earnest of things to come. Then, from single heroes of mighty faith, the captains of God's army, the leaders of the people, he goes on to the whole army of Martyrs and Confessors who had suffered for God before Christ came; who were 'stoned, sawn asunder, slain with the sword,' every word speaking of some noble deed of faith crowning a life of faith. And so he turns to the Hebrew converts. They, too, might *then* be martyrs. The flame of persecution was lighted and was around them. But what does he teach them? 'Having,' he says, 'so great a cloud of witnesses,' these witnesses to the might of God, and the power of faith, and the reality of things unseen, which yet in their souls they saw; 'having these witnesses' encircling us as a cloud, uplifted above the earth, flashing forth with the light of God the lustre of their mighty deeds and the refreshing streams of their heavenly teaching; 'let us'—do what? follow their example? do and suffer what they did and suffered? S. Paul, as a wise teacher, begins with the beginning, not with the end. He says, lay aside what hinders you from being like them, that so in the end ye may be like them, with their Saviour and yours. 'Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us.'

This is the first step, 'Cease to do evil,' and so 'learn to do well.' He speaks of us as in a race, a race for life eternal. Who gives us strength to run? The Author of our faith will be Himself the Finisher, will complete it in time, and reward it in eternity. Now, two sorts of things hinder men in a race,—a weight to carry, or what ever and anon entangles their feet. What is the weight in our way to heaven? Is it not the mass of worldly thoughts, cares, longings, the confused heaps of sins which bow us down, of which we confess, 'the burden of them is intolerable.' And what, then, is the one sin which so easily besets us? Is it, that we are mostly born with one special temptation? We have not all the same trials, but we have each, one special weakness or passion, or evil inclination, which besets us again and again, is ever twining itself around us, and from which, until we disentangle ourselves, we make but little progress. It is the occasion of our stumbling, our falling, our slowness in heavenly things. It comes upon us sometimes in the very same shape, sometimes in another. It takes us sometimes by surprise, sometimes by storm; sometimes in acts so slight that we heed them not, sometimes in temptations so vehement, that they carry us off our feet; so you have felt when briers have entangled you and hindered your walking. The more you stumbled on impatiently, the more hold they seemed to have on you. If you took them off quietly, you were surprised sometimes how slight a thing it was which was hindering you.

S. Paul's word, then, suggests to us two sorts of work before us to be done by the grace of God :—1. We have to strive against the whole body of sin, everything which is against the holy will of God, 'every evil inclination (says Bishop Andrews), all iniquity and profaneness, neglect and haughtiness, strife and wrath, passion and corruption, indolence and fraud, every evil motion, every impure thought, every base desire, every unseemly thought.' 2. We have all, probably, some one besetting fault, which is our own special hindrance. Both of these we must learn by looking into ourselves: they vary in all. No two persons have exactly the same temptations, as no two minds are exactly alike; and so we ought not to judge of others, nor can we judge of ourselves by them. We must look into ourselves. And this is the examination of ourselves which S. Paul bids us use, which all who have grown in the grace of God have known to be necessary for the soul; and those most, who have been most holy.

If any of you have not been able to discover your besetting sin, or should not be certain about it, do not therefore give up having some special battle with your sins, some one strife in which, by God's grace, you shall endeavour to have complete mastery over some one sin. Pursue, strike it down, whenever it appears. One blow will not do to death a besetting sin; it would not be well for us to have the victory so easily.

Whatever a man's besetting sin is, he has through careless childhood, or self-willed, self-pleasing youth,

strengthened its hold upon him. Thin, fine, invisible as a gossamer thread, when the light of God shines not upon them, seem the single threads of our sins. The enchantress sin smiles sweetly on you, that you may conceive no ill until she has wound them slowly around you. When she has wound them she will clap her hands and say, 'Thou art mine.' Slowly they intertwine, line with line, fibre with fibre, sin with sin; once intertwined, no human strength can burst the tightened cord. Stronger than thou is he who, whilst thou wert asleep and listless, wound them round thee; but stronger than the strong man is He who will unloose thee. Yet one by one didst thou let these cords pass over thee; by little and little didst thou give thyself to be bound; little by little will God unbind thee, that thou mayst know into how evil and sore a bondage thou hast sold thyself, how helpless and powerless thou art to free thyself.

In this warfare there are some rules, alike for all sins, special to each; some which relate to self-knowledge; some, how to be on our guard; some to help our repentance; some, whereby we may gain strength to fight.

It is of the very greatest moment to know the occasions of our sin, and the way in which it shows itself. To know the occasions puts us on our guard; to know how our sin shows itself gives us the means of stopping it. Thus, as to these occasions, one is made angry if he is found fault with roughly, or even at all,

or slighted, or spoken slightly of, or laughed at, or kept waiting, or treated rudely, or hurt even unintentionally, or if his will is crossed, or he is contradicted, or interrupted, or not attended to, or if another be preferred to him, or if he cannot succeed in what he has to do. These sound little things, my brethren, when we speak of them in this house, in the presence of God, and in the sight of eternity. But these, and suchlike little things, make up our daily trials, our habits of mind, our life; our likeness or unlikeness to God, Who made us in His own image; our eternity.

Our first step is to know these things; our next, not to despise them. For such as our acts in them are, such do we become ourselves, and as we become now, so shall we be everlastingly. In these little things, then, ye must know yourselves, and thank God that, by taking heed to such little things, ye may please Him.

As you learn to know yourself, you will come to be more upon your guard, and morning by morning you should tell Almighty God, in simple words, what are the temptations to this sin, which, by His grace, you would subdue, and pray Him to give you strength to keep from the least shadow of them.

If we wished to gain contentment we might try such rules as these :—

1. Allow thyself to complain of nothing (not even of the weather), knowing that everything is ordained or overruled by God.

2. Never picture thyself to thyself in any circumstances in which thou art not.

3. Never compare thine own lot with that of another.

4. Never allow thyself to dwell on the wish that this or that were otherwise than it was or is.

5. Never dwell on the morrow. Remember that it is God's, not thine. The heavier part of sorrow often is to look forward to it. 'The Lord will provide.'

Some few simple rules of this sort will be of use against any other ruling passion. They brace the soul; they give it a definite steadfast aim; they teach it to fight, not as uncertainly; they set acts before it whereby it may please God. They give it tests to itself, whether it is exerting itself to please God or not.

Then do not try only to abstain from sin, but strive, by God's grace, to gain the opposite grace.

If thou art tempted to be angry, try hard, by God's grace, to be *very* meek; if to be proud, seek to be *very* humble. In this way, God, seeing thy earnest wish to please Him, will keep thee pure, and thou wilt be further from the workings of sin, and so in less peril.

Then frame to thyself, or ask some one to help thee to form for thee, some simple rules, which may help to guard thee, or check thee, from giving way to thy sin, or which may aid thee in gaining the grace thou desirest.

Then, thy daily work is to use them. Thy daily exercise may be very short. God looks not at the length of words, but at the earnestness of thy heart.

If thou hast longer time, God will look graciously upon thee the more of thy time and thought thou givest to Him. In this too God saith to each of you, 'If thou hast much, give plenteously; if thou have little, do thy diligence gladly to give of that little; for so gatherest thou to thyself a good reward in the day of necessity.' If thou hast but little, a few minutes will suffice.

It will help thee much in thy warfare if thou first set before thy soul thy Lord, as He showed forth that grace which thou wouldst copy. If the grace be humility, think of Him washing the disciples' feet; if meekness, think of His receiving the traitor's kiss, and how thou hast betrayed Him by thy sins; if it be patience under injuries, behold Him standing meekly while they buffeted, reviled, mocked, spat on Him; if it be love of thy brother who offends thee, think of Him stretching out His hands upon the cross and embracing the whole world, and thee too, with thy brother, in His love. There is no thought which has such power over the soul and over sin as the thought of Jesus. Behold Him in thy soul; gaze on His meek Countenance, His Eye full of love resting on thee, the suffering of His Brow pierced for thee, and so ask Him, for His love's sake, that thou mayst love Him and be less unlike Him. And then be very watchful; watch with thy Lord for a short time; summon thy whole strength to keep thyself wholly from every form of this one sin.

But you cannot know whether you fail or no unless

you examine yourself; and you will find that it costs you less time, less weariness, less irksomeness, and is more hopeful, to examine yourself twice or thrice, than once only at the end of the day. At the end of the day, the whole day becomes one confused colourless distance. Thou canst distinguish no objects in it. It is like looking back on a day's journey. If thou look back from time to time from some height, thou canst see spread out before thee what thou hast passed through. If thou wait to the end of the day, by no effort of thy mind canst thou bring back more than some two or three points which arrested thee. Thinkest thou this a hard thing? Even a heathen advised to examine every morning on rising from bed what thou wert about to do; of how much more moment it is, not to give way to thy failings, and to review this oftener than morning and evening.

Listen not to Satan telling thee this is hard. It is hard when thou beginnest. Listen not again if Satan tells thee when the hour comes, 'It is good, only not now; now I am tired, weary; I can remember nothing, think of nothing. How can I think of what I have said, thought, or done through these hours?' Pray God to show thee. Thou wilt most likely see but little at first. All things are done ill at first. Only pray God to forgive what thou seest. It will be a great gain if thou hast truly seen and repented of but one thing. To have learned, in one day, with sorrow of heart, for love of Jesus, to look into thyself, and bewail, not thy

sinfulness only, but the sins of that day, to Him, is the first and hardest step to eternal life. Pray to persevere, and all the rest will be easier.

Is not all this that thine own soul, thine own self, thy very inmost self, whom thou shouldest love, nay, thy very inmost self, may be enlarged to contain God and the love of God? It is that the eyes of thy soul may be enlightened to see Him as He is; it is that thy soul may be brightened to shine with the brightness of God; that thy senses may desire nothing but what they have in that blessed-making Light of God; and have what overwhelms all their desire, to be blessed in His Bliss, wise in His wisdom, good in His Goodness, joyous in His Joy, full of God, yet stretching forth to God. Ye will not think it a hard thing, my brethren, to prepare yourselves for such fulness of bliss. God grant that ye may, in some way, begin to-day. 'To-day' is ever the day of salvation.

PAROCHIAL SERMONS, vol. ii. p. 130.

Victory amidst Strife.

I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind.—Rom. vii. 22, 23.

Conflict is continual. It spreads through the whole life, and through every part in man. 'From the sole of the foot to the crown of the head there is no soundness in him.' Man is besieged on all sides. No power, no faculty, no sense is free from this warfare. Every sense is tempted or tempts to sin; the law of sin is found, although by God's grace it reigns not, in all our members. The hearing tempts to curiosity, longs for forbidden knowledge, or for flattery; the eyes covet; the taste invites to greediness; the touch to wrong softness, or sloth, or passion. The mind wanders away from God to all sins of the body, and is the seat also of its own proper sins, ambition, pride, anger, envy, avarice, and the like. But though the whole man is besieged thus within and without, his inward self, his life, his soul, where God dwells, whereby he is united to God, is hemmed in, but not overcome, unless his will consents. 'Sin lieth at the door.' The will holds the

door closed; the will alone opens the door. If thou open not the door thyself, sin cannot enter in.

Thou hast, then, these two opposite sides on which, by God's grace, to guard thyself. Think not lightly of the power of sin, for it threatens thy life. Despond not on account of this power of sin; for God will keep it chained, unless thou thyself free it and invite it unto thee. It does not of itself make thee evil, although it is evil in thee. It is *in* thee, but, if thou wilt, it may be subdued unto thee. It is present *to* thee; it is not *thine*, except thou make it thine. It does not separate between thee and thy God. 'The law of sin in the members,' although evil, is not thy evil, unless thou will it, and encourage it, and make it 'the law of thy mind.' 'The law of God,' if thou 'delight in it in the inner man,' is God's good *in* thee, and thine, if thou will it. And mightier will be God's good *in* thee, His power, His grace, His love, His Holy Spirit, which He has placed within thee, than the evil of thy nature to thee.

No risings, then, of any passion, yea, though it should rise again and again against thee, and, by rising, weary thee and almost wear thee out; no thought by night, when thou hast not power over thy soul, and thy will is not conscious; no thoughts by day, which come to thee again and again, and besiege thee, and torment thee, and would claim thee for their own; no distractions in prayer, even if they carry thee away, and thou lose thyself, and awake, as it were, out of a dream, and thy

prayer be gone,—none of these things are thine. Nothing without thy will is thine, or will be imputed to thee. It is not the mere presence with thee of what thou hatest; it is not the recurrence, again and again, of what thou loathest, which will hurt thee, not even if it seems to come from thy inmost self, unless thou wilt consent to it.

But the more good God is to thee, in thus not imputing to thee that to which thy will gives no assent, the more diligent thou must be not for a moment to give way, or to will what God wills not. All this evil is against the holy will of God. 'The law of sin,' which would assault thee, and bring thee captive to itself, does rebel against the law of God. Only so long as thou hold it down, it rebels against *thee* as well as against God. Do thou submit thy own will to God, and God will subject this contrary will to thee. Yea, thou wilt the more be of the same mind with God, the more thou art opposed by what is contrary to thee, if thou yet subduest it. Each unlawful motion of the soul does, in truth, dispute the wisdom and goodness of God, who forbids it, and makes it unlawful. Every motion of envy is against His love; all anger is against His gentleness; all pride is against His greatness, and thy dependence on Him; all unholiness is against His holiness; all foul thoughts are against His purity. But though these and other things boil up out of the muddy lake of thy corrupted nature against the Brightness of His Serene and Holy Nature, give not place in

the very least, and though they take place *in* you, they will not be done *by* you.

Thou canst not have victory unless thou be assaulted. The thickening of thy temptations may be the very favour of God, Who permits Satan to try 'and sift thee like wheat,' and yet wills that thou shouldest not fall.

Even then, though fierce temptations should come on thee in thy holiest moments, when thou art most earnest in prayer, or when thou hast received thy Lord in Holy Communion, or when thy will is strongest, thy soul humblest, thy soul most self-forgetful, fear not. Rather thou mayst take it as a token of God's love, Who sets thee in the conflict. He will uphold thee by His Hand when the waves are boisterous. So shalt thou have the victory through His Spirit; thou shalt, in His might, trample on the Evil One, the more he assaults thee. So shalt thou hate sin the more, the more thou art tormented by the sinfulness of thy mortal nature, and be a good soldier of Jesus Christ, Who willeth to crown thee, and to be crowned in thee. Only hold fast to Him; grasp His Hand the tighter by Whom ye are held; He will refresh thee when weary; He will meet thee as the King of Righteousness, and will recruit thee with spiritual food, His Body and Blood; He will forgive thy sins; He will heal thine infirmities; He will renew thy decays; He will hear thee when thou criest; He will answer thee when thou prayest; He will have compassion on thy afflictions; He will loose thy bands; He will uphold thy feeble

knees; He will make straight paths for thy feet; He Himself, thy Redeemer, will be thy way unto Himself, thy God.

Resist the very first motions. It is *then* that thou art most in thy own power. Be not weary of resisting, although the temptation come again and again. Be not off thy guard, although it go away for a time in order to come again. Each such resistance is an act of obedience to God; each, done by His grace, draws down more of His grace to thee; in each His good pleasure will the more rest upon thee; by each thou wilt become more a vessel of His grace and love, more fitted and enlarged for His everlasting love. Christ, Who is the Power of God and the Wisdom of God, will dwell in thy soul as in His own abode. He will rule thee; He will teach thee; He will speak with thee; He will fence thee from the assaults of the enemy with the helmet of salvation; He will direct thy sense within; He will guard thee without.

And, through all this conflict, the more thou art tossed here, the more thou wilt learn to long for thy heavenly home, the home of His rest and love. Thou shalt learn to long lovingly for that day when the remaining corruption shall be put off, and this body of sin have died through this body's death, but the body itself be instinct with new life, and conformed to the glorious body of thy Lord. Death shall be to thee the gate of life, the end of woe and conflict, the beginning of eternal refreshment, the entrance into thine eternal

dwelling-place, where thou shalt have all thou now longest for, shalt rest in the Sight of God, shalt joy in His love, shalt be enriched by His imparting of Himself. Thou shalt then see what thou now believest; thou shalt have what thou now hopest for; thou shalt attain to what thou now canst not receive.

PAROCHIAL SERMONS, vol. ii. p. 337.

The Teaching of God within and without.

The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him ; and He will show them His covenant.—Ps. xxv. 14.

God reveals Himself in two ways to man, within and without. Even when man had fallen from Him, and God left him for a time to walk in his own ways, He still, S. Paul saith, 'left not Himself without a witness, in that He did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.' By His Providence in the order and variety of the seasons, 'by the unspeakable beauty of the whole world, by the rich and ordered bounty of His unutterable Gifts,' by His dispensations of chastisement or of love, He revealed Himself without, 'gave to the heart of man the tables of an eternal law,' and wrote His Word 'on the pages of the elements.' 'What,' says a holy writer (S. Bernard), 'is this exceeding variety of forms, and countless beauty in things created, but rays of the Godhead, showing that He from Whom they are indeed is, yet not explaining what He is, so that thou seest what is from Him, not Himself?'

But even on the heathen He wrote a more inward law which answered to that outward, and interpreted its voice—the law of conscience. 'These,' says S. Paul of the heathen, 'show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another.' 'To all mankind,' says a heathen, 'conscience is God.' 'Thinkest thou,' says another, 'that he has escaped, whom his mind, conscious of his fearful deed, holds stricken?' 'Night and day, they bear their witness in their breast.'

Each of these Voices of God is made more distinct as man is brought nearer to God. Without, together with God's Voice in nature whereby He still speaks, when we forget His Voice of grace, He hath given us 'the writings of the law, the oracles of prophets, the melody of the Psalms, the instruction of Proverbs, the experience of histories,' the words of the Son made Flesh, by Himself or by His Apostles. Within, together with the voice of conscience, He spake too by the Spirit.

These two voices must ever be heard together. The outward voice falls dead and cold when the inward is not awakened; the inward is not given to take the place of the outward; and all who would so use it have mistaken suggestions of their own mind, or of the Evil One, for the Still Voice of God. God's outward voice reveals, His inward applies what it has revealed. His outward Voice declares what we are to believe and do; His inward Voice opens our ears and our heart,

that we may believe and love and do it. Without His inward Voice we should be like an instrument unattuned, which can give forth none but harsh and discordant sounds. Without the outward, we should be like the same instrument attuned, yet none to play upon it.

The Jews heard our Lord with the outward ear, and saw His miracles, and could not deny them, yet in vain. 'Hearing, they heard, but understood not; seeing, they saw, but perceived not; for their heart was waxed gross, and their ears were dull of hearing; their eyes have they closed, lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.'

God had opened the inward ear of Cornelius and of the Ethiopian eunuch, and He wrought a miracle that they should not lack His outward teaching, sending S. Peter and S. Philip to instruct them. He opened the jailer's heart by the terrors of the earthquake, and gave him S. Paul to teach him, whereby he and his house might be saved. Lydia's heart and the three or five thousand He opened at once through the ministry of His preacher, and the inward teaching of the Spirit.

And so it is now. S. Augustine's heart God opened at last by the voice of his conscience, and by the word of the apostle, 'Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.' S. Anthony's He opened by the words of

His Son, 'If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come and follow Me.' Towards us, too, He often speaks with power through some words of Holy Scripture which we have often half heard and neglected, and He draws water out of the flinty rock. He prepares our hearts to fear Him, and so He speaks to them in mingled sounds of terror and of hope.

What then? Because God must prepare the heart and open the ear, and Himself speak to it, doth nothing depend on us? Doth He teach us 'whether we will hear, or whether we will forbear?' Not so. *He* only speaketh, but it is with us to hearken or no. It is much, nay, it is everything, not to turn away the ear, to be willing to hearken, not to drown His Voice. 'The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him.' They, then, who do not fear Him cannot hear it; and this both on God's part and on man's. Man will not hear, unless he fears, and in the end God will not speak. Man casts out grace, deadens his ear, until God's Voice sounds fainter and fainter, and comes seldomer, and at last there follows the stillness of death. It is heard no more. God leaves the soul, and it is dead. Every wilful sin is part of this deadening of the soul. Ye cannot wilfully refuse in one way, or at one time, and hear at another. Ye cannot stop your ears to part of God's message, hear and not hear what ye will. The soul is a beautiful instrument, attuned by the hand of

God, and breathed in by His Holy Spirit. It cannot be attuned and untuned at once. It cannot yield at once the harmony of heaven and the jarring discords of earth.

The very heathen saw that virtues were linked together by a golden band, so that they said, Whoso hath one hath all, and no one can have one perfectly who hath not all. 'Dead flies,' saith the wise man, 'cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour;' that is, the sweet anointing of the Holy Spirit is, by but a few dead works or evil thoughts wilfully harboured, corrupted and destroyed.

The Psalmist speaks not of 'the secret of the Lord' only, but of a 'secret converse' with the Lord, as of a Friend with his friend. To enter, then, His secret presence we must not be taken up with things which are not He. To have the love of this great Friend, we must desire no love out of Him. To be capable of the fulness of His love, we must long to love Him ardently. Desire to love God alone, and all things else in Him, to love Him for Himself, to love Him ardently, and no measure of His love will He withhold from thee.

We must not be taken up with things out of Him, if we would have His secret presence. Not man's manifold labours, but his manifold cares, hinders the presence of God. Labour ordained by God, and wrought for and in God, invites God's fuller presence, for God is in the heart of him who, in the very sweat of his brow, toils as God appoints him. Cares, of which man himself is the

end, so far shut out that fuller presence, because they enter into and take up the heart. God, who chose the fisherman, and the tax-gatherer, and the tent-maker to confound the wisdom and the greatness of the world, yea, He who framed the worlds, but Himself became the carpenter's Son and the carpenter, will fill and inundate with the sweetness of His love, and enlighten with His wisdom, and enrich with His consolations, the poorest and the most unlettered who plies his daily task for Him. The very things of God Himself, if sought for themselves, not for Him, may shut out God. Nay, there is this very danger in the most sacred things, in holy thoughts, or fervent words, or transporting feelings, or labours of love, or heart-lifting sounds, or Divine knowledge, that they may take up the soul more readily in themselves, and the soul stop short in them, because it fears no danger, being, as it were, 'on holy ground.' But if, even in these things, so nigh to God and shadowing out His very presence, men may forget God, what should we think of those manifold cares and thoughts of this world wherewith men encompass themselves? How can God speak to the soul, when the eye is ever roving with curiosity, the ear ever listening for some new thing, the mind ever musing on things of this world? 'If,' says a holy man (S. Bernard), 'thou preparest the inward ear for this voice of thy God, sweeter than honey and the honeycomb, flee outward cares. So shall thy inner sense be clear and free, and thou mayst say with Samuel, "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth."

This voice soundeth not in the market-place, nay, nor is heard in public. A secret counsel calleth for a secret hearing. He will assuredly make thee hear of joy and gladness, if thou receivest Him with a sober ear.'

'They who would behold God,' says S. Gregory, 'dwell in a loneliness of soul, and, free from the tumults of worldly cares, thirst for God. But what availeth to be alone in body, if loneliness of heart be lacking? For whoso liveth apart in body, but, by thoughts of worldly desires, mingles himself in the tumults of human life, is not in loneliness. So then, in those who live well, there is first given a loneliness of mind, so that they keep down the din of earthly desires, rising within, and through the grace of heavenly love, restrain the cares of the heart which bubble up from below, and with the hand of gravity drive away from the eyes of the mind, like flies buzzing around, all the motions of light thoughts, which obtrude themselves, and they seek for themselves, within themselves, some secret place with the Lord, where, freed from that outward din, they may, through inward longings, in silence speak with Him.'

And now, if thou wishest to live more with and to God, and that God should dwell more in thee, and be thy God, these few brief rules may help you :—

Be with God in thy outward works, refer them to Him, seek to do them in Him and for Him, and He will be with thee in them, and they shall not hinder, but rather invite, His presence into thy soul.

Collect thyself from time to time in God, whatever thou doest, and thou shalt feel Him to be with thee in all.

Look to Him, and not to man, and thou shalt see His good Hand in all evil, His healing Hand in all things painful, His Love in all man's unkindness, Himself overruling all evil, giving all good.

Empty thyself of thyself if thou wouldest that God should fill thee.

Be very jealous how thou speakest of the love of God to thee, or of the love which He giveth. It is 'the secret of the Lord.' 'Thy secret to thyself,' it was said of old. God *can* (so to speak) only give Himself to the lowly, because His very gifts would injure one who was lifted up by His gifts. Even S. Paul had 'a messenger from Satan to buffet him,' lest he should be exalted by the revelations given him.

Then thou must desire His love with an ardent longing. How should we hope that so great a good as God should be given to careless, unloving hearts who desired Him not? Yet He, out of His boundless love, longeth that we should love Him. For God so loveth us that He would make all things channels to us and messengers of His love. Do, for His sake, deeds of love, and He will give thee His love. Still thyself, thy own cares, thy own thoughts for Him, and He will speak to thy heart. Cast out love of self, and He will give thee Himself. Ask for Himself, and He will take thee unto Himself. Cease to do evil, and He will give

thee of His good. 'The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him.' Truly a secret hidden thing is the love of God, known only to them who seek it, and to them also secret; for, what man can have of it here, is how slight a foretaste of that endless ocean of His love! For 'eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor heart of man conceived, the good things which God hath prepared for them that love Him'—Himself Who alone is, and is Love and Bliss. Be then His, and He who maketh thee His, is Himself thine.

PAROCHIAL SERMONS, vol. ii. p. 240.

Re-creation of the Penitent.

Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.—Ps. li. 10.

Pardon, acceptance, peace, Heaven, are opened at once to all who, with penitent hearts, return to God through Jesus Christ our Lord. The love wherewith God receives returning prodigals hath its spring in His unchanging, unending love; the first gush of tears waters the seed which shall be reaped in everlasting joy. We are replaced, by repentance, on the road to life, whence we had wandered, yet at the beginning, not at the end; God does not take away trials, or carry us *over* them, but strengthens us *through* them. When He turns men to Himself, He changes their will, not their trials. Whereas before, forsaking His grace, they were defeated, *now*, through His grace, He gives them victory over their besetting sin. But there can be no victory without warfare, nor warfare without toil and pain. He turns men round that, whereas before they turned their backs on Him, henceforth they should hold Him before them, aim at Him, stretch towards

Him, and He makes each act wherein they obey Him a step towards Himself and His everlasting love and bliss.

Sin does us lasting injury. Each separate act changes, so far, our moral nature and our trial. Each leaves its effects upon our souls. Even heathen wisdom saw that our acts, one by one, tell upon us. They form habits, and these, as ye know, are a second nature. And so, when we repent, we have not only that corrupt nature to subdue, which we inherited from Adam, but that second evil nature also, which, by our own personal sins—sins which, by God's grace, we might have withstood, but into which, through negligence or wilfulness, we fell,—we formed in us. And this evil nature, as we formed it by repeated acts of disobedience to God, so it is mostly little by little, amid obedience to Him, and through His grace, that God unmakes and remakes it.

Step by step, act by act, ye have become whatever ye are. Most can recollect the first decided act in which their sin mastered them. It might without labour have been slain then.

In whatever degree we did not this our trial is changed. We nurture sin with our own heart's blood, and when we have strengthened it against ourselves, we cannot at once destroy it. By the grace of God we may subdue, keep it chained, restrain its outbreaks, but it is there still. It is not dead, but lives within us, ever anew lifting up its head and hissing at us, still to

be bruised again and again by *His* Cross, Who bruised the serpent's head, and will 'bruise him under our feet shortly.' It may be subdued by His grace, amid unwearied watchfulness, but if we relax our grasp, it anew threatens, perhaps wounds us. Our path is in steep slippery places; if we loosen our hold of the Rock, we slip back.

This is a weary warfare. Even the apostle cried out, in the name of our whole nature, 'Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' But we make it more weary to ourselves, by not owning that it is *now* our appointed warfare, and that our help henceforth is not in ourselves, but in God alone. The apostle answers his own cry for a deliverer, 'I thank my God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.' The prophet David, after his fall, sets his whole hope in Him: 'Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit in me.'

Plain as this is, earnest souls often make their own burthen heavier, by forgetting it. They feel (as it may be) their minds darkened, unstrung, unearnest, sluggish. Their souls are haunted with jealous, envious, proud, self-conscious thoughts. And they brood over themselves and their wretchedness, and lose peace of mind, and all sense of reconciliation with God, and impair their child-like love, and seem to fear God as an enemy, or an offended Judge, and themselves to be enemies of God, not forgiven prodigals in their loving Father's house.

Yet to despond because we are what we are, what is

this but still, in a subtle way, to imply that it is in our own power to become otherwise? So only would it follow, that if our affections are not at once changed as we would, this is our own present sin, and that we have not a heart right with God at all. But this is to suppose that we ourselves can make or mould or remake our own hearts. Not so the prophet David, in that great psalm of penitence, which is the model for all true penitent souls, the language of the aching, hungering heart, which longs to be restored to the full favour of God. In it God teaches us what to own of ourselves, and how to pray; what gifts we need, and how to ask for them.

David was forgiven. He had cast himself, without defence, without excuse, upon the mercy of God. He had summed up all in the great simple confession, 'I have sinned against the Lord,' and gathered into two words, a whole volume of confession. In himself he speaks of nothing but sin; he pleads nothing; all was one act of sin—'I have sinned,' and that 'against the Lord.' All creatures vanish from his sight: 'Against Thee, Thee only have I sinned.' All else disappears before Him, and he stands, as it were, alone in the whole world before God, himself wholly a sinner, face to face, before the All-Holy, All-Good God. And for his penitence he had received his pardon. 'The Lord hath also put away thy sin.' And yet, thus pardoned in the name of God, he still prays for himself as injured by his sin, his grace impaired, the gracious presence of

God's Holy Spirit diminished, the stain of sin in part remaining, the 'free, noble, willing, generous, princely' spirit, wherein he had, as 'the man after God's own heart,' done devoted service to God, dimmed. He was already pardoned, and so throughout the deep Psalm there is not one prayer for pardon. But he had deeply wounded himself, and so the whole Psalm is wellnigh one prayer that God would restore the graces he had lost.

This restoration he prays for as gradual. 'Wash me throughly,' literally 'more and more,' 'from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sins.' God *had* forgiven him; David owns that he had not yet restored him wholly. 'Wash me more and more,' as though the white robe of purity and innocence, which, by his two-fold deadly sin he had so deeply soiled, needed ever renewed cleaning. Not once only, doubtless, but through his remaining life did he pray this, his own penitential prayer, 'Wash me more and more,' many times, manifoldly, wash me; as confessing a deeply-dyed guilt, which seemed as though it could not be cleansed except by repeated, manifold washings. So our own good Bishop Andrews, night by night, prayed, 'Forgive the guilt, heal the wound, blot out the stains, heal my soul, for I have sinned against Thee,' and S. Peter, cock-crowing after cock-crowing, wept his fall.

And then the royal penitent further prays, 'Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.' God's working is a continual creation. In

the support of our bodies we pray for 'our daily bread,' and when given, we receive it as the gift of God; and the daily decay of our bodies is restored through the powers which God gives us. So also in the life of the soul: it is ours to pray for the daily increase of grace, the enlarged gift of God's Good Spirit, and receiving IT, to use IT. We cannot give to ourselves any grace, but we have the fearful power of not asking for it. We cannot give ourselves the talents which God intrusts us with, but we may, by His Grace, use them, or, by neglect of His Grace, be slothful servants, and hide them, or bury under a mass of earthliness 'our Lord's money,' that Image wherein we are 'anew created in righteousness and true holiness,' and the lines of which should, by daily contemplation of the holiness of Him in Whom we are anew created, be daily deepened in our souls.

The truth of God is our comfort and stay, our protection against our fears, as well as against our pride. Since we have nothing but what we have received, where is boasting? We are beggars from the Hand of God. But since we cannot give ourselves any good gift, neither need we be cast down because as yet we have it not.

We need not, then, we should not, toss ourselves to and fro because we have feelings which we cannot remove, thoughts which come unbidden, which we hate. That upon which our salvation hangs is not what we have been, not what effects we suffer from our past sins, but what we now *are*, and whether in the

right way now we persevere in repentance and the desire for the love of God.

What we have made ourselves we cannot ourselves unmake. Are we then to sit still under it? Not so, but since we *are* helpless, *God* All-Mighty and All-Loving, and 'more ready to hear than we to pray,' to give than we to ask, *pray*. This should be our one resource. Pray for the grace of God, and for the second grace to use it, and then use it. 'Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a steadfast spirit within me,' a spirit (literally) firmly fixed, established, steadied; not steady in itself, but steadied by God; steadied as being firmly built on that foundation which is Christ.

Brood not in heaviness over thine own state, or what thou imaginest to be thine own state before God. Count everything temptation which holds thee back from God. God willeth that all should be saved.

They are wellnigh wasted hours, in which thou broodest sorrowfully over thyself, as though there were no hope, unless they issue in prayer to God. There *is* hope, yea, and assured salvation, for all who will now hear God's call, and turn to Him. Let every pang of misery and self-reproach issue in a brief prayer to Him, a sigh for His help, a longing for His purity, and He will create in thee a clean heart, and every cry shall bring down the touch of His Hand to cleanse it.

'Create in me a clean heart, O God.' We then shall be the same, and shall not be the same. We shall be the same selves, but all which now so clings

to us as to seem engrained in our very nature, the whole old man, shall be laid aside, melted away with the Fire of the Divine Love, and replaced by 'the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.' 'Renew a right spirit within me.' And meanwhile this new self is re-created through every prayer to God. For prayer is the voice of the Holy Spirit within us, and calleth Him into ourselves. It is enlarged by every act of humility, for He dwelleth in the contrite heart; by every deed of love, for God is love; by every imperfect obedience, for with those who obey Him He dwells; by every earnest calling on the name of Jesus, for 'He is very nigh unto all who call upon Him.'

PAROCHIAL SERMONS, vol. ii. p. 181.

The Ascension our Glory and our Joy.

If any man serve Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there shall also My servant be.—S. John xii. 26.

Truly, if we could ever live in this day (Ascension Day) all were joy. It is the crown of all joys, the joy of all creation, the wonder of the blessed Angels, the union of all being, the finishing of the earthly course of the Son of God, His entrance into glory.

It was the joy of the holy Angels. They joyed at the birth of Christ. Then, too, the multitude of the heavenly hosts sang with joy, 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will towards men.' They joyed that He Whom they adored, Whom they beheld, Whom they loved, was come down to dwell among us.

They envied us not the honour that our nature, not theirs, should be for ever united with God, should be the link and bond between the Creator and the creature. They loved that the will of God should be. They loved us, because God loved us, and He had come to us.

They had sung for joy when this our world was created. And now they saw the end of the Creation.

In the birth of our Redeemer they saw what they had desired to look into—the wonderful plan of man's redemption. They saw the end of all their ministries, and how their broken ranks would be filled up, and the voices wanting to their endless song of praise be supplied. They saw that He, their King, Who was to knit together all creation in one, and with God, was become one of us. Full often had they, during His earthly ministry, 'ascended and descended upon the Son of Man,' eager to hear His words, to learn from His ministries to man, and watch every token of His will. They longed for His return, they desired to look into the course of His earthly being, and to gaze on His Divinity, now visible and gleaming through IT. Doubtless many were present at His agony, though one only appeared. Many, together with the powers of darkness, hung in sorrow around His Crucifixion, although those only who were appointed, carried the soul of the repentant robber to Abraham's bosom. Many, doubtless, were present, joying at the Resurrection, although one only rolled away the stone after He was risen, and two, in shining garments of joy, sat, the one at the head, the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. But now how must not only 'a multitude of the Heavenly Host' have poured themselves out to meet their Lord, but all orders of the Heavenly Hierarchy, Angels, Archangels, Cherubim, Seraphim, Thrones, Do-

minions, Powers, must, as if with one gaze, have wondered at, reverenced, adored their and our Lord, returning in His Glory. Since 'there is joy in heaven among the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth,' what must have been the joy over the completed Redemption, —to see our Lord, 'the First-Begotten from the dead,' arrayed with the Majesty of the Father, 'leading captivity captive,' bringing the fathers, who had waited for His coming, to their appointed place, and Himself, above all created beings, above the stars, above each rank of Angels, at the right hand of God!

Forty-two days ago He was mocked as a fool, a pretended king, a rebel against an earthly sovereign, a blasphemer. Then He was crucified. To the humiliation of the Cross He descended to the humiliation of the grave. He overcame death in the abode of death. And then 'from the lower parts of the earth' He rose to this earth; then from earth to Heaven, and 'the Heaven of Heavens.' The Cherubim, who guarded Paradise against our fallen nature, are His Throne, as they are the Throne of God. But He riseth not as Elijah, through chariots of fire and horses of fire. By the inward power of His Divinity, through which He rose from the grave, He riseth above all created being, until He reacheth His own abode—the only abode where *He* can dwell, who, having become Man, is still God—the Right Hand of God, 'the Bosom of the Father.'

Rise in thought as much as ye can. In a manner it is *not* beyond all thought, although, in a manner,

it *is* above all thought. It is not beyond all thought, for God tells us here, not of infinity, not of eternity, not of His unbounded immensity, as God. He tells us of the Human Body of our Lord, which, all but our sinful imperfections, was once like ours; which rose, impassible and a spiritual Body, from the grave, but was a Body still; to be handled, touched, felt, sustain the pressure of the apostles' hands; in which He still vouchsafed to eat and drink; which rose from the earth the same Body still, in its wonted act of blessing His own.

It is not beyond all thought. For, although there are Heavens to which these our Heavens are as earth, and Heavens of Heavens, these are in space. They may but help us to ascend in thought with our ascending Lord. We know from Holy Scripture that the third of these, the abode of those who sleep in Jesus, is Paradise (2 Cor. xii. 2, 4). And doubtless the others too have their own inhabitants, some order of Angels. In all, to-day, from lowest to highest, the everlasting doors were opened. Throughout them all there echoed, 'The Lord of Hosts, He is the King of Glory,' as He received, while passing, the worship of Angels, Archangels, and all the Heavenly Hosts; until His Human Nature sat down with His Father on His throne, and all the eyes of all the blessed spirits gazed, admired, worshipped, and loved that Nature enthroned above them all, to which it was once said, 'Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return.' Follow on, and yet

follow on. Gaze, and gaze, and gaze, higher, and higher yet, and yet beyond. There are in the Heavenly Hierarchy many orders, each in its own nearness to the Glory of the Godhead. Each is *one* step towards the throne of God. Picture to yourselves those stars whose light (it is thought), travelling almost like spirit, had, in near six thousand years, but just reached this earth. Think of them, sun beyond sun, sun beyond sun, at distances almost beyond the range of thought. Each sun is but one step towards the Throne of God, to that Light of Light unspeakable, to which the sun's insufferable light is darkness.

Beyond, above all these, surveying all, governing all, 'upholding all with the word of His power,' judging all, not by motion or word or command, but by His obeyed Will, on the Throne of God, abides in thy nature thy Redeeming Lord. Where He is we can imagine, for the human mind can imagine space linked on to space, and space to space, although, to our bounded sense, each seems all but boundless. But what *He* is now, who can think? We can think of material glory, material light, light purer, intenser, softer, brighter than any, the fullest, softest radiance which we ever saw, all-piercing, all-pervading, all-dazzling. But what can we think of the glory of God, wherein His Human Form lives, wherewith *it* is radiant, that Light which lightens all that lives, fills all the Heavenly Hosts with light, transparent, yet which shrouds, by its very brightness, the depth of the invisible Glory of the Godhead? Yet

in that Divine glory lives that very Human Form which our Loving Lord took for us, unchanged, save that the glory which, when He was on earth, was veiled, now issues forth the light and joy of all throughout the spheres of Heaven.

There, bright with uncreated glory, are the Eyes which wept over His city, and which, on the cross, though dimmed with His precious Blood, beheld us, and had compassion on us. *There* are the Hands once pierced for us, once stretched out to embrace us, which, in parting from us, blessed us. In form they are the hands of a man, but with the power, the might, the Glory of God.

It is a comfort to us when those whom we love are away, if we can set before us their faces, imagine their looks, picture them in our souls, as when they were most loving, gentle, tender, good towards us. Who has not thought of those who have passed away out of our sight to Paradise, as the martyrs have been allowed to be seen of old, with the same countenance and look of pure holy love which they once had here, yet 'now surpassing bright, so that their likeness could scarce be recognised, because the eyes of the flesh gleamed with angelic radiancy'? Yet, comfort and joy although it were thus to dwell on them, they could not speak to us, do not, so far as we know, know our inmost hearts, and, so knowing, love us. But it is our very own Lord, He Who became one of us, Who walked to and fro among us, Who went about healing all who were oppressed by

the devil, comforting the broken-hearted, keeping company with sinners, admitting publicans and harlots to come to Him,—it is He, the sinner's Friend, Who is now at the right hand of God for us.

What He was, He is, save as to those infirmities, which in Heaven cannot be. In Heaven He cannot again be hungry, or weary, or athirst, or sorrowful, as neither shall we be, if by His grace we attain thither.

It is the very ground of the boldness of our approach to His throne of grace, that we have not an High Priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of, 'cannot sympathise with' (so the word is) 'our infirmities.' Ill have they spoken who have spoken of our Lord, as 'a severe Judge,' as though there were easier ways of coming to Him than by ascending in soul to His own Mercy-seat, or praying Him to look down from thence, from the highest Heaven, upon our misery and our sin. Mistrustful and unjust to His Goodness has any thought of any wanderer been, who thought that his misery was deeper than that Mercy, or that his cry could not reach that pitying Ear.

His eyes, as the beloved disciple saw them, were 'as a flame of fire,' beaming brightly on those who love or desire Him, consuming the impenitent. 'His Countenance shone like the sun in his strength,' with spiritual light, and the brightness of grace, and radiant mildness, and enlivening glow. Yet it is the same Countenance which looked upon Peter in his fall; the same look which melted the heart of the dying robber by His

Side. The same Eyes which shone on Mary Magdalene at His Feet, live on, shine on, unchanged, except in Glory. The love must beam forth even more now; since the Divine Nature, veiled then, shines forth in its strength now; and 'God is love.' His Feet seemed to S. John 'like to fine brass, as if they burned in the furnace' so transparent and translucent were His very Feet with the Divine Glory. Yet they are the same Feet which S. Mary Magdalene anointed and 'washed with her tears, and wiped with the hairs of her head.' They are the same Feet which for us were pierced; and the prints of the nails, in everlasting glory, bespeak and plead silently the depth of His love, the merits of His Passion.

But since the very Presence of His glorified Body in Heaven is such an earnest of mercy stored up for us, what when that very Presence is for us? 'Who ever liveth to make intercession for us.' There He asketh as man, what as God He giveth. His Human Nature is not, as it were, withdrawn into His Godhead. He Who shall be our Judge is God. Yet is He 'that Man whom God hath ordained.' He shall come in the same Human Form in which He went. His Human Will was ever on earth the same as His Divine Will. Both willed together as one, the same as the Father willed. Perfect Man He is, as well as Perfect God; we cannot worship Him as God without adoring Him as Man. When we sue, weep, pour out our griefs, complain of our darkness, dryness, distractions, unsteadfastness, or all the natural miseries of our human life, we cannot tell him as God

without speaking to Him as Man. For 'God and Man are one Christ.' If we think of Him, His Human Form comes before our eyes. Not in displeasure, even when He chastens us, not as rebuking now, as He did His very disciples in the flesh, not as upbraiding us, does He there sit, thence look down and behold us, much less in wrath! The 'wrath of the Lamb' is not yet. The words which He spake on earth may well pierce us often through and through, 'as a two-edged sword, piercing the very joints and marrow.' His words which He spake here recall us to ourselves, as they shall judge in the Last Day those who disobey them. But *He* Himself 'ever liveth to make intercession for us.' He pours down graces upon us; He opens our hearts to receive them; He knocks at the door of our hearts that He may enter in; He, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, comes and dwells with those who love and obey Him. His Name, until the Judgment Day, is nowhere mentioned in Holy Scripture save as to mercy and love. Through Him, and in Him, are predestination, redemption, reconciliation, cleansing from sin, life, light, grace, peace, faith, hope, love, righteousness, wisdom, sanctification, sonship of God, inheritance of Heaven, oneness through His indwelling Spirit, a new creation, perseverance, triumph over the enemy, victory, salvation. These are the gifts which, 'when He ascended on high, He gave unto men.' These He sheds abroad in every human heart which will receive them, in one continuous stream from the day of Pentecost

until the end. Until the end He standeth at God's Right Hand to succour us; He liveth to intercede for us.

Yet, although in Body for us at God's Right Hand, He is still, as God, as near to us as when He was in the flesh. Here, where we are gathered in His Name, could our eyes behold Him, He is in the midst of us. He is 'with us unto the end of the world.' Yea, He is with us in a nearer way, if we will, dwelling in us by His Spirit, and feeding us with His Body and Blood.

Such are the present joys and glories to us of this Great Day. Our own nature, as an earnest of God's mercy, set down at God's Right Hand. Our Lord, God and Man, there interceding for us. O may we follow Him! For there He is entered in, not for Himself only, nor only to intercede for us, but to prepare a place for us, 'that where He is, there,' He saith, 'may My servant be.' Nay, there, in a manner, we are already. For where the Head is, there, in some sort, in token, and in earnest, and in virtue, are the members. Where He is, there are we who are 'in Him.' There 'is our conversation;' there 'our life is hid.' There are 'the first-fruits of the Spirit;' there has He made us 'to sit in heavenly places in Christ;' there is our home; there, if by God's grace we persevere, above the stars are the vacant seats prepared for us, that, 'as He overcame and is set down with the Father on His throne,' so we, by His strength overcoming, shall, He says, 'sit down with Me on My throne.'

O let us listen a while then, in peace and recollection of mind, this day, if we may catch some sounds of that unutterable melody which rang through every sphere of creation, 'Glory to Him Who sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.' Well might our hearts die within us for joy could we hear or picture to our souls the faintest echoes of that everlasting harmony, in which the Church of the Firstborn, men and Angels, on this day first blended, each separate voice singing, with its own special sweetness of thanksgiving for His mercies to itself, some distinct notes of that unceasing, unwearying, undying, ever-renewed, ever-new song, whose compass none can reach, for it is of the Infinite love and mercy of our God, whose love hath been, is, and shall be, from everlasting to everlasting, without beginning and without end. For He loved us in eternity, when we were not, and made us and redeemed us, because He loved us, and in all eternity will He love all who shut not out from themselves His love.

PAROCHIAL SERMONS, vol. ii. p. 216.

Christianity without the Cross a corruption of the Gospel of Christ.

And He said to them all, If any will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.—St. Luke ix. 23.

Does then our redeeming Lord indeed speak these words to us? Is there no way out of them? Would He still say them, if He were to come again upon earth and preach in our market-places? But was He not then the Eternal Word? Did He not say, 'Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away'? Does He not say, 'The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day'? Does not that Other Comforter, as He called Him, that 'best Preacher,' God the Holy Ghost, still preach those words to us many times in the year? Are they not part of the 'everlasting gospel'?

But what then? Does not only men's practice, in great measure, fall short of the Pattern and Ideal set before them, but is, as has been said, 'Modern Christianity a civilised heathenism'? Do men not only but half-believe our blessed Lord's words, but is His plan a failure? Have we altogether parted with Him Whom

we adore, Whom we desire to love? Or, how is this state of things around us compatible with the Divinity of the Gospel, which He was?

Compatible it certainly is, since He predicted it. For what else do the parables of the tares and the wheat; the good and bad fish in the one net of the kingdom of God; the three sorts of soil upon which the seed sown was wasted, and the one soil in which it yielded varied proportions of fruit; the wise and foolish virgins; the sheep and the goats; the slothful servant who knew his Lord's will and did it not; the many called and the few chosen; the wide gate and the broad way which leadeth unto destruction, and the many who go in thereat; those who shall say in that day, Have we not prophesied in Thy name, and in Thy name done many wondrous works? and to whom He shall say, 'I never knew you;' those who should cause one of those little ones who believe in Him to offend, and for whom it would be better that they should be cast into the sea;—what is this and the like but that chequered scene of good and evil which our eyes behold? Nay, He pictures the times before His Coming as just such times of luxury, selfishness, worldliness, as we see all around us. He tells us of that abounding of iniquity and the consequent chillness of love, which we too well know. One who less knew the human heart than He Who made it, or the intensity of its self-will, might well have thought that it could not resist such overpowering love as God has showed us.

It is not in the heart of man to imagine such obduration of the soul against it, even as some picture to themselves a conversion of the soul after death, in those who will not to the end be turned back to God here. One who had not a Divine knowledge of the heart would not have imagined such Divine love wasted. To human success it is essential to believe its own power to succeed. 'They can, because they think they can,' is true of men. Divine wisdom alone knew the limits which self-obdurating free-will would set to the prevailingness of Divine love and Divine grace. Success and failure were predicted at once; Divine success from Divine power; partial failure contemporaneous with the success, from the limit which God set to the putting forth of His own Omnipotency—our free-will.

We may then well dispense ourselves from the superfluous task of vindicating our Redeemer. The love of God, revealed to us in Christ, has eternal ends, even beyond that unutterable bliss of those who will to be saved. 'God hath set us the Apostles last,' S. Paul says, 'as a spectacle to the world, and to Angels, and to men'—'to the intent that unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known through the church the manifold wisdom of God.' 'The Angels,' we are told, 'desire to look into the Sufferings of Christ, and the Glory which should follow.' Nay, even apart from the hints which Holy Scripture gives us, it were inconceivable that the mystery of the Incarnation, the union of God the Creator with us,

should not, in ways more unutterably vast than we can imagine, affect every order and individual of that creation, those gigantic Intelligences and Powers, of whom we know scarce anything except what is conveyed to us by their names, but over whom, with us, our Incarnate Lord is Head. But, leaving to Almighty God the wisdom of His own doings, it concerns us more nearly, yea, most nearly (for it may be our salvation)—since there is this evident contrast between the precepts of our Lord and the outward show of much which thinks itself Christian, which would be shocked and feel itself aggrieved or insulted, if it were told that it is not Christian—have we corrupted Christianity? The question ought not to startle us. Where are those seven churches to whom God the Holy Ghost dictated those seven Epistles in the Apocalypse, and of the corruption of which, or their chequered good and evil, or even of whose unmixed good, yet of the necessity of perseverance, He wrote? And yet what He said to them He says expressly that He said to all who have an ear to hear: 'He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.' Corruptions in the Western Churches before the Reformation were miserably great; all acknowledge it: there would not have been otherwise a rent so great. Protestant missionaries have not much more to say of the Eastern Church. I am not speaking of our devotions, or of that which, as a Church, we teach and set forth as truth; but of that which they contradict, what we

should amend if we followed them—our popular maxims, our lives. Is our nineteenth-century Christianity, in all which concerns our lives, in that habitual every-day course of life whereby we are pleasing or displeasing God, our standard of what is right or wrong, like that which our Lord left on earth for us to follow?

Again, I speak not of the poor. They are the special heritage of Christ. His mission was especially to preach the Gospel unto *them.* He pronounced them 'blessed.' He declared that 'theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' Even now they bear still the likeness of His outward lot. They wear His livery and badge. Poverty is full often a sort of sacrament to them, conveying to them His hidden grace; their privations, when well endured by His grace, are 'a kind of sacrifice to Him; they even by their patient endurance will have some portion of the reward of those who not only believe, but also suffer for His sake.' And happily they are the largest portion of Christendom. Christ is probably more often to be found in the hovels of the poor than in the drawing-rooms of the rich. At the worst, I should think that in that great Babylon, our metropolis, the atmosphere of S. Giles' was more healthy for the fruits of the Gospel than the air of Belgravia.

But again, I speak not of individuals. However horribly like, not *their* condition, but ours also, is to that of Dives, God alone knows who are really such. In outward luxuries we far exceed him. The whole

realm of luxury and comfort has expanded, even to those who have fewest of what would be called luxuries. He had not the necessaries of his breakfast from the two opposite ends of the earth, or his fuel from the earth's bowels, gained by the unacknowledged and unthanked toils of his fellow-men. It were well, exceeding well for us, if we were content with the luxuries which the Prophets condemned. This outward lot is not, we must hope, their and our all. In one way it bears most on our judgment hereafter, whether we are steadily setting ourselves to act up to what we know. We are not responsible, in the same degree, for the fog and mist around us, which hinders our seeing beyond a little way, unless we could ourselves remove it. And yet, although we be swept along by the torrent of tyrant custom, or may not see how effectually to resist it, we must often have felt a misgiving, 'Are we honest with the words of Christ?' Let us hear Him, as we just now heard Him. It is He, our Redeemer, our Judge, who speaks, 'If any will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.'

Our Lord sets Himself before them to accept or to refuse, if any will. God so loveth the free choice and love of His creatures, that He draggeth us not as stones, but draws us with cords of loving-kindness. God became Man to win our love. He calls us on no road which He hath not Himself tracked with His blood. The closer we follow (even reason tells us), the nearer we come to Him. He respects our free-will, in

which He created us, whether we *will* follow Him or no; but if we will to follow Him, the way is but one. He is the Truth, and cannot bid us follow Him in ways which lead away from Him. He cannot bid us serve Him and that which is contrary to Him. 'Ye cannot serve God and mammon.' It is a contradiction, as it would be to walk on two opposite roads at once, to go at once backwards and forwards. The words are simple, 'If any will to follow Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.' Self-renunciation stands at the threshold of the school of Christ. Our Master saith not (in our petty way of speaking of 'self-denial'), 'Let him lay aside this or that,' but 'himself.' It were little to renounce what one *has*, unless one renounce also what one *is*. One might renounce anything one has, and plume ourselves on having renounced it. The self which we are to renounce is the self, which is opposed to God and the will of God. 'We are,' says a Father, 'one thing, as we are fallen by sin; another, as we were created by nature; one thing, which we *have* made; another, which we *were* made. Let us forsake ourselves, such as we have by sinning made ourselves, and remain ourselves, such as by grace we have been made. The proud, who, by conversion to Christ, hath been made humble, has forsaken himself. The luxurious, who has changed his life to continence, hath renounced what he was. The covetous, who hath ceased to seek for gain, and hath learned to give bountifully of his own, hath forsaken himself. He

is himself by nature; he is not himself in ill. Paul had denied himself, who said, "Yet I live, but not I." Dead was that fierce persecutor, and there had begun to live the pious preacher. "But Christ liveth in me." "I," he saith, "am dead from my former self, for I live no longer after the flesh; but not dead essentially, for in Christ I live spiritually." Let then the Truth say, "If any will to come after Me, let him deny himself;" for unless any cease from himself, he approacheth not to Him, Who is above himself; nor can he lay hold of that which is beyond himself, if he know not how to do to death what he is.'

. . . Did our Lord, the Truth, mean what He said? Let me ask you an opposite question. Did our Lord, being God, become Man only that His disciples should lead as easy lives as they can, multiply to themselves as many comforts and luxuries as they can, say to our souls, with the rich man whose soul was that night demanded of him to give account of his stewardship, 'Soul, take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry,' so only that thou be not drunken? Is His law, 'Thou canst not serve God and mammon,' obsolete? Or is what He declared impossible become possible with time? Are we to turn our Lord's Woes into Blesseds, and His Blesseds into Woes, and still call ourselves His disciples? Shall we say, 'Blessed are ye that are rich,' 'Blessed are ye that are full,' and 'Woe unto you that are poor,' 'Woe unto you that hunger now'? It is what men's every-day lives, what our boast that 'we English

understand our comforts,' what our self-gratulations, seem to say. Can we persuade ourselves that our treasure is *not* where our heart is? or that our heart is not *there*, for which we toil? A heathen said, 'The despot money commands or serves each.' It commands those who slave for it. We are not less its slaves, if we toil for it, to spend on ourselves, our comforts and our luxuries.

If we cannot find one word of our Lord's to excuse our living for this world, and hoping to gain heaven, how did they understand Him, to whom He spake or revealed Himself? Let us ask him, men's favourite Apostle, because, while he teaches that we are 'justified by faith,' they hide from themselves that he speaks not of an inactive faith, but of a 'faith that worketh by love.' What didst thou, Paul, understand by this metaphor, which men satisfy themselves with calling a metaphor because they do not like its meaning? What didst thou understand by this doctrine of the Cross, thou, who dost tell us that thou didst 'determine to know nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified'? Didst thou live to the world, or to Him who died for thee? 'God forbid,' he says, 'that I should glory save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, whereby the world is crucified to me, and I unto the world.' In the Cross of Christ the world was crucified to him, and was dead; it had no power over him to hold him, for it was dead; it had no attractions for him, no winningness to him, for to him it was a corpse. And he, too, was

crucified to the world on that same Cross. He could, like his Lord, embrace the world with outstretched arms, in that large heart, but not with any longing for it, save to win it to his Lord. He was 'co-crucified with Christ,' and had no will, no longing, no affections, no love for it, but Christ's; he heard not its revilings; he heeded not its praises, for he was dead to it. 'All which it loved was a cross unto him, the delights of the flesh, honours, riches, vain praises of men: all which it counted a cross, to *that* he clave; to *that* he was nailed; *that* he embraced with his whole heart.' His former self was dead. 'I have been, and am, crucified with Christ; it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me.' He was dead to all besides; he felt them not, heeded them not, cared not for them, any more than one dead; all of himself was dead and gone; his human passions were nailed to the cross of Christ, and were dead. 'Dead,' says a Father, 'were pleasure and pain, and wrath and fear, and timidity and vehement emotion, and pride and rashness, and memory of injuries and envy, and self-defence and covetousness, or any other affection which defiles the soul. He had stripped off all which was not in Christ, and his life was Christ, who was Sanctification, and Purity, and Immortality, and Light, and Truth.' 'Not I live, but Christ liveth in me.' Christ wrought all his works in him; Christ spake by his tongue, so that he spake those fiery words of persuasive, burning love; Christ was the Heart of that vast heart which embraced all, Jew and heathen,

those who were won and those who could be won, and those who could not yet be won, by and to the love of Christ, breathing forth the fire of Divine love, with which he was himself kindled. Christ in Him made known in all the world the riches of the mystery of the faith in Him; Christ filled up in His servant 'what was yet lacking of His own Sufferings for His Body's sake, which is the Church;' those sufferings which He willed should be endured in His members for His members, that so His own meritorious Sufferings might reach unto all those for whom He died. 'To him to live was Christ.' Christ was the source of his spiritual life; Christ was, within him, the perpetual maintainer of his life; Christ was the pattern and exemplar of his life; Christ was the object and substance of his life; Christ was in all things the mainspring of his life, the informer of his words, the inworker of his acts, the endurer of his sufferings, the instrengthener against temptation by His grace and gracious Presence; in whom he strove according to *His* working, Who worked in him in might Divine. And so, since Christ lived in him, and to him to live was Christ, 'to die was gain;' for the persecutor's sword was the finisher of his toils, yielding him up to Him, for Whom, and in Whom, and by Whom he lived.

. . . Will any other apostle of our Master who was crucified for us, give us easier terms?

You would scarce expect it of him, our Lord's brother, whose knees were hardened like a camel's, being bent

evermore in prayer to God for forgiveness for his people. Certainly *his* idea of the *summum bonum* is different from that of Heathen philosophy, nor could it ever occur to any one apart from Christ and His Cross. It would not occur to us, *now*, living in the midst of, and boasting ourselves of the Gospel of Christ. 'My brethren, count it all joy,' the sum of joy, comprising in itself all other joys, 'when ye fall into divers trials.' And these were no passing trials, but enduring. For their benefit was endurance. They were to test endurance to the utmost, and yield the soul perfected for 'the crown of life' which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him. The joy of S. James is the exultation of S. Paul: 'yea, we glory in tribulations,' and on the self-same ground, that the Christian's joy cometh from being perfected by the Cross. 'Tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed.' For both Apostles repeated their Master's lesson, 'Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.' 'Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' Whence the martyrs' cry so often was, 'Thanks be to God!'

But what of the opposite condition, which men now count so happy? 'The rich man,' he says, 'exulteth in that wherein is humiliation.' He assumes it as a thing known, or which ought to be known, to them: 'Friendship with the world is enmity with God;' 'Whoso would be the friend of the world is made,' by the very fact, by

being so minded, 'an enemy of God.' He that loveth the one, as our Lord saith, despiseth the other. Such are already 'adulterous souls,' fallen away from God Who hath made them His own, and giving themselves over to His enemy.

Or ask S. Peter, him who would have dissuaded his Master from the Cross, him who was drawn by love of his Master to the judgment-hall, and there cowered before a little maid and denied Him, to whom our Lord, foresignifying his death, said, 'Follow thou Me.' Wherein did he understand that following to be? For our Lord says to *us*, as to him, 'Follow Me.' 'If, when ye do well and suffer, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God; for even thereunto were ye called'—called whereto?—to 'suffer patiently for well-doing.' Suffering he declares to be the very object of our calling, even as S. Paul and Barnabas 'confirmed the souls of the disciples in every city' where they had preached, telling them that 'we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.' But S. Peter assigns, further, the ground of our being so called, because we are members of a thorn-crowned Head; *because* Christ also suffered for us, 'leaving us a copy,' as children copy line by line and stroke by stroke, that we should follow close upon His steps, marking them, placing our feet as nearly as we can to them; and those steps were, in that sad road to Calvary, tracked in His own Blood, shed for us.

Again, see how close he brings us to our Lord. 'Christ then having suffered in the flesh' (as he had

said, 'Christ died for our sins, the Just for the unjust,' to bring us to God),—'arm yourselves,' not, assuredly, for a listless peace, 'with the same mind as Christ' when He suffered; 'for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin.' We, being members of Christ, are counted as having ourselves suffered with Christ, 'that we should no longer live the rest of our life to the lust of men, but to the will of God;' that the one object of our lives, our affections, our new regenerate being, should be the will of God. The thought of Christ crucified, the sharing of His sufferings, not without us only, but within us, is the panoply of Christians. Or look at that saying, 'If the righteous scarcely (with difficulty) be saved,' and that, in view of judgment through which he has to pass and to be sifted therein. Surely this does not speak of an easy, good-natured, effortless life, but a life passed, as he also says, 'If ye call upon Him as Father, Who, without respect of persons, judgeth every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here with fear,' and that the more, he adds, on account of the exceeding preciousness of the price of our redemption, the precious Blood of Christ. We have to give account, not of our lives only, but of the terrible ingratitude of despising our Redeemer.

Once more, let us ask him, the beloved disciple, the Apostle of love, who lay on his Master's breast, and drank there the streams of wisdom and of love, he who speaks so much of the love of God towards us, of the propitiation of our sins, of the life in God begun in us;

of the beatific vision of God. What saith he? 'He that saith that he abideth in Him, ought himself also to walk even as He walked.' 'If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.' 'Abide in Me,' Jesus says, 'and I in you.' 'Abide in Me,' of Whom ye have been made members, by faith and love and obedience, and I will abide in you by My grace, and the continual influx of My Spirit. If then we abide in Him, we are to walk as He walked. We all have an idea that we are to keep, in a general way, God's commandments,—not to swear, not to lie, not to commit certain excesses. But does this suffice to walk as Christ walked? Is this mere negative or limited Christianity to walk as *He*, Whom we own as our Exemplar, walked? 'What,' says an approved writer, 'is to walk as He walked, but to despise all prosperous things, which He despised; to fear nothing adverse which He bare; to do cheerfully what He did; to teach to do what He commanded; to hope what He promised; to follow where He went before; to bestow benefits on the ungrateful also; not to requite ill-wishers as they deserve; to pray for enemies; to love the good; to pity the perverse; to invite those averted (from God); to receive lovingly those converted; to endure patiently the treacherous and the proud; to die to one's own sins as He for ours; for, as one dead in the body detracts from none, injures none, despises none, corrupts, envies, flatters, courts none, so they who have crucified their flesh, with the affections and lusts, living to God, live

not to these or the like sins'? 'What must he do,' says a Father, 'to whom the great name of Christian has been vouchsafed? What else than diligently judge in himself thoughts, words, deeds, whether each of these look to Christ or are alien from Him?'

You would not expect relaxation from S. Jude, whose whole Epistle is one upbraiding of the sins of false teachers and relapsers. But, among their very heavy sins, it is startling, to our self-indulgent age, to find the habit of our times, 'feeding themselves without fear.' He does not mention gluttony, or excess in meat or wine, but that, in supplying the wants of nature, they fed without reverence and awe, lest they should do amiss.

So did the goodly company of the Apostles inculcate, with one voice, a life to be led above the world, contrary to the world, and conformed to our Redeemer, as *the* way of salvation.

. . . He does not put hard things upon you. He who accepts the cup of cold water will accept petty self-denials. Self-indulgence is a hard master, not Jesus. Vice wears the body, self-denial braces it. Sin is an exacting tyrant; the service of God is perfect freedom.

Give yourselves anew to Him who gave Himself for you. He grudged not for you one drop of His heart's blood; grudge not to Him the price of His blood, yourselves. Think of that place around the Eternal Throne, which He, by that blood, has prepared individually for you. Jesus will impart to your petty cross

some of the virtue of His saving Cross. He will make any hardness sweet to you, who is Himself all sweetness and every pleasurable delight. He will give you His own love, and

> 'The heart that loveth knoweth well
> What Jesus 'tis to love.'

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